BUMPER CHRISTMAS BUYING GUIDE 2006

164 PAGES

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA

BOOK OF TESTS
SPECIAL ISSUE

Nikon D40
EXCLUSIVE first look!

Special Issue 2006 Issue No.117 £4.20 (UK)

THE ULTIMATE BOOK OF TESTS
Every major model of 2006 reviewed

Canon 400D
Nikon D80
Which one is the best?

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AOL Keyword: What Digital Camera

100 CAMERAS

PLUS

50 TOP ACCESSORIES RATED

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THE WDC TEAM

The Team

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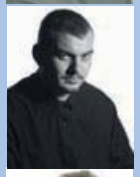

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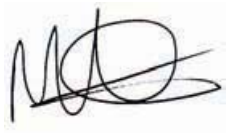
WELCOME...

...to our annual bumper Book of Tests. This is the issue where we condense all the cameras tested during 2006, plus a few from last year that are still available. This year we've even managed to shoe-horn 50 of the best accessories into the mix too. So if you're looking for a camera or major accessory for Christmas this is an indispensible guide to what's hot and what's not.

There are some brand new tests too, including a head to head between two of this year's biggest SLR launches, the Canon EOS 400D and Nikon D80. These two are sure to be among the best selling DSLRs over the next few months, so find out how they stack up against each other on page 16. See you next month for our annual Awards issue.



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MONITOR news

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Nikon D40

FIRST LOOK!

A first glimpse of the successor to the D50

Nikon has announced a replacement for its best-selling entry-level D50 SLR. The D40 is Nikon's smallest-ever DSLR and features the same 6MP sensor as the D50 but with numerous enhancements, including the processor from the D80.

Targeted at an entry-level family audience, the D40 is also Nikon's cheapest ever DSLR, with a launch price of £450. It comes with an 18-55mm AF-S lens, (there will be no body-only option) and is compatable with all AF-S Nikon lenses.

The D40 has been designed from the ground up to attract those upgrading from compacts, and first-time digital camera owners who may otherwise have chosen a bridge-type camera.

Features such as an in-camera manual and image assist explain the functions of the various modes through short descriptions or visual examples, and the 2.5in LCD, which also displays the shooting data, can be customised to show a graphic representation of the settings as well as the traditional view, and can also be further personalised with a 'wallpaper' background image.

However, Nikon hasn't forgotten the more-advanced 35mm SLR owners on a budget, and the D40 also features a full range of creative and manual options. The D40 will be available from December.

Key *Features*

- **SENSOR** 6.1MP
- **LENS** 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 AF-S DX
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 1/4000sec–30secs and B
- **ISO** 200 - 3200
  EXPOSURE MODES 11, inc 7 vari-programs
- **FOCUSING** 3 area AF
- **METERING** 3D Colour Matrix Metering II, Spot, C/W
- **MONITOR** 2.5in LCD with 230,000 pixels
- **OTHER** PictBridge, In-camera editing (D-Lighting, redeye correction, image trim) In-camera manual, Image Assist, 2.5fps continuous shooting, RAW
- **POWER** 470 shot Li-Ion battery
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 126 x 64 x 94mm / 475g

* Download these sample images at www.whatdigitalcamera.com

The Editor's *View*

I spent two days getting to know the D40 during Nikon's press launch in Dubai. The first thing that strikes you is the size. It's visibly smaller and lighter than the D50, and the D80 that I was also using – though not quite as small as the Olympus E400.

It is still unmistakably a Nikon, however, in its build quality and ergonomics but with a simplified body, with fewer exterior buttons. The top-plate LCD has gone, too, with shooting data moved to the large, bright 2.5in LCD screen on the back.

The interface is very clear and well thought out; each mode includes a brief explanation of why you'd use it, and for the ISO, metering, focusing and other adjustments, thumbnail images provide visual clues as to their benefits.

In use I found this system slowed things down a bit, requiring numerous button presses to, say, change the ISO, though the target 'shoot-and-go' audience will probably have less requirement to do this.

I was using a first-run production model, and found the performance was pretty good. Exposures were consistent, the three-point focusing was rarely wrong-footed and the image quality gave little cause for concern. The D40 will only be available with the 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 G ED Mk II lens, not as a body only, so it's reassuring that the lens is a good one. It, too, has been updated from the one supplied with the D50, thanks to a new internal motor. (The D40 lacks an internal focus motor, so will only be compatible with AF-S lenses, which have their own).

First impressions are that this will be a strong challenger in the entry-level sector, but we'll be featuring a full in-depth test next month.

Face up to Fuji

Fujifilm has announced a super-slim new entry to its lifestyle Z series – the first to incorporate hardware-based Face Detection technology.

Dubbed the **FinePix Z5fd**, the new camera will feature 6.3 Megapixels, ISO 1600, Intelligent Flash and new blog mode; plus Fujifilm's unique Super CCD HR and RP Processor II. Confirming the camera's intended status as a lifestyle accessory, the camera will be available in three colours: Raspberry Red, Mocha Brown and Silver. It will also serve as the flagship of Fuji's Z series alongside the FinePix Z3 and Z2.

Fujifilm was the first manufacturer to develop hardware-based Face Detection technology for its compact digital cameras. The FinePix Z5fd joins the FinePix S6500fd and F31fd in Fujifilm's current 'fd' line-up, and is able to capture up to 10 faces in a frame before optimising focus and exposure.

The Z5fd also features Fujifilm's new blog mode. In this mode, the camera adjusts image settings for posting online. With the increasing popularity of blogging, Internet messaging and sites such as MySpace.com, Fujifilm expects blog mode to be a well-used feature on the FinePix Z5fd.

The camera is expected to hit shops this January; more information is available at **www.fujifilm.co.uk**

High street *vs* online shopping

Online retailers continue to offer the best value when it comes to consumer electricals such as digital cameras and printers – that's according to the latest report from *Which?*. Researchers saved more than £1000 buying a Christmas shopping basket of eight items online rather than on the high street.

The biggest saving – 22 per cent, was on MP3 players. The 4GB Apple iPod Nano was £49 cheaper at getflashing.com than at the cheapest high street store, and while cheaper models tended to cost around £20 less online, savings increase significantly on pricier models. Other good Internet buys include DVD recorders, photo printers and digital cameras – with a researcher saving £184 buying the Sony R1.

The high street was dealt a further blow through a second survey looking at the quality of PC repairs. Experts introduced simple faults to PCs and took them to 20 computer repairers. Prices to fix a loose cable ranged from £10 to £139 and researchers were charged from £20 to £260 to fix a simple software problem. PC World perfomed particularly badly, in one case telling researchers to buy a new computer rather than face the purported large cost of repair. Despite poor results in some independent repair shops, most provided good repairs, lower costs and impressive service.

More information and full results can be found at **www.which.co.uk**

snap shots

POST YOUR PICTURES ANYWHERE

Stationer 3M has launched a new take on the Post-It note designed specifically for digital camera users. The company has brought the Post-It note concept to photo printing by introducing Post-It Picture Paper. The 6x4in sheets are compatible with inkjet printers, and are covered with repositionable adhesive. Users can print their photos on Post-It Picture Paper and then stick the photos on almost any dry surface. Available with either a matte or semi-gloss finish, a pack of 25 sheets starts at £4.99. More information is available at **www.3mselect.co.uk**

HOLIDAY BRITS ARE SNAP-HAPPY

The number of photos captured by Brits abroad has almost doubled in the past five years. A study by insurance company esure reveals that, over the past five years, the average number of pictures taken on holiday has doubled from 49 to 86 – driven by the popularity of 'going digital' and technical advances of mobile phones. A fifth of holidaymakers (19%) admit to taking more than 100 photos, with 3% going seriously snap-happy by clicking more than 300 times on their holiday – with a development cost of more than £20.

PNY LAUNCHES OLYMPUS 2GB XD CARDS

PNY Technologies has enlarged its xD-Picture Card range by launching the 2GB capacity Olympus-branded card, capable of capturing 1000 shots using an 8MP camera. PNY and Olympus are, meanwhile, planning even bigger cards, eventually up to 8GB. All Olympus xD-Picture Cards also offer an Olympus panorama option found within Olympus digital cameras. The new cards will be available later this month, with a suggested retail price of £61. Find out more at **www.olympus.co.uk**

LEAN ON ME

Four new tripods have been added to Calumet's line-up of camera supports. The Calumet 7300 features four-section legs with quick-release leg locks, while the 7500 is for all cameras up to medium format, for use in the studio or on location. The 7016 with a three-way pan/tilt head is designed for stills photography and features individual forward- and side-tilt locks and a pan-locking knob. The tripods start at £54.95; more information is available at **www.calumetphoto.co.uk**

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Animal instincts

Captivating shots of animals – from an elephant's trunk to a snail caught larger than life – have been shortlisted in the RSPCA Young Photographer Awards 2006.

The competition, which is sponsored by Olympus and magazine printing company Warners Midlands, is now in its 16th year and judges have chosen 28 pictures from 10,000 entries to the prestigious competition.

Wildlife photographer, TV personality and Young Photographer Awards 2006 competition judge Chris Packham said: 'I'm constantly amazed by the superb quality of pictures this competition attracts – quite simply they are stunning, and would grace any photography exhibition. These young people have an eye for the original which enables them to see something familiar in a very different way.'

Shortlisted pictures this year cover animals ranging from wildlife to insects, birds to pets. Entries for the main competition were divided into two different age groups: under 12 and 12-18 years. The winner from each age group will win a weatherproof Olympus [mju:] 750 digital camera worth £300, and four runners-up will each receive an Olympus FE-190 digital camera.

The best overall picture chosen from the shortlisted entries will receive an Olympus E-500 digital SLR camera with two zoom lenses, and the chance to join the RSPCA on an exclusive photo shoot for a day.

The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony at the Natural History Museum on 15 December. For more information and photography tips from Chris Packham, visit: **www.rspca.org.uk/ypa**

Photobox StyleBooks

If you're one of the thousands who have tried their hands at creating a photobook, you may be interested to hear of Photobox's latest spin on the digital album. The online processing giant has introduced StyleBooks – a new, more affordable 8x8in square photo-book with a glossed card cover and silk finished pages. Billed as fun 'visual story books', there are four styles to choose from – Classic, Elegant, Contemporary and Photographic – all with their own fonts and choice of coloured pages and covers.

The books can be personalised further with composite JPEGs, scanned pictures and illustrations, with prices starting at £14.99 for 30 pages. The original hardcover PhotoBook range has also been extended with a new range of colours, including pink and baby blue. There are three different templates including Formal, Simple and now, a kids-themed PhotoBook. Each PhotoBook can have from 20 to 50 pages, filled with almost 200 images. There's more info at **www.photobox.co.uk**

MICRO VAULT ROYALE

A special-edition, 007-themed Micro Vault is to join Sony's line-up of USB media, in celebration of the latest James Bond movie. The 007 Micro Vault incorporates a slide-up USB connector and 1GB capacity. Pre-installed Virtual Expander compression software allows storage of up to three times more data. It's on sale now for around £40.

CHEAP AND CHEERFUL

There's a new Ricoh Caplio on its way to stores in time for Christmas. The Caplio RR730 offers 7MP, a 2.5in LCD and 3x optical zoom – all in a body style that's smaller and lighter than its RR660 predecessor. Aimed at photographers seeking a user-friendly point-and-shoot model, it has six scene modes, 32MB internal memory and macro shooting down to 5cm. The RR730 is priced at an entry-level £129.99; more information is available at **www.ricoh-cameras.co.uk**

WACOM IN WHITE

Wacom has announced a special-edition white tablet, designed to match white laptops and computers, particularly from Apple. The Graphire4 Classic White Edition provides the same features and pressure sensitivity as the rest of the Graphire4 line-up, and is suitable for image editing and optimising digital photographs. It comes in either A6 or A5 sizes, at £74.99 for an A6 version and £149.99 for A5. More info is available at **www.wacom.com**

WANNA JOIN US?

WDC is looking for a new writer. If you're passionate about digital photography, have a good technical and practical knowledge, can express yourself in a clear and entertaining way, and fancy working in central London for the UK's biggest consumer magazine publisher then email your details to nigel_atherton@ipcmedia.com by 1st Jan 2007.

>>

Last year's winning entry was captured by Australia's Steve Ferrier

Sense of Achievement

Achievement is to be the theme of the 2006/7 Commonwealth Photographic Awards. The seventh annual competition is open to all Commonwealth residents, and is designed to offer an insight into how people in the Commonwealth, with its mixture of cultures and ways of life, see themselves and others.

Organised by the Commonwealth Press Union, Achievement is the theme of the open competition, while two additional categories will invite entries from particular groups. The Canberra Times/CPU Young Photographer Award will be offered to a young person from a developing country. The prize is a three-week photographic residency at the newspaper's offices in Canberra, Australia.

A 'Three Pictures – One Story' section, meanwhile, is inviting entrants to create a storyboard. The purpose is to tell a story of achievement in three pictures for a prize of £250. The overall winner of the Commonwealth Photographic Awards will receive £1000, and further prizes will be awarded to regional winners. CPU Training Director, Jane Rangeley said: 'By supporting photographers – whether amateur or professional, young or old – we are encouraging an independent view, press freedom and democracy. We therefore endeavour, via these awards, to promote photography as an important form of media.'

As part of the competition, there will be several exhibitions taking place in Commonwealth cities featuring the winning images. The first will be in London in March 2007. The final competition deadline is Wednesday, 17 January 2007. Full details are available at **www.cpu.org.uk**

Sanyo's Budget Beauty

Sanyo has announced the release of a new 7MP compact camera that boasts some new features.

The **Xacti E7** features a 3x optical zoom, a 2.5" LCD and 30fps VGA movie recording, in addition to a number of fresh shooting options. An onboard Touch Sensor promises faster autofocus with just a light touch of the shutter release, while a sequential shot function is capable of shooting at 2.3 frames per second.

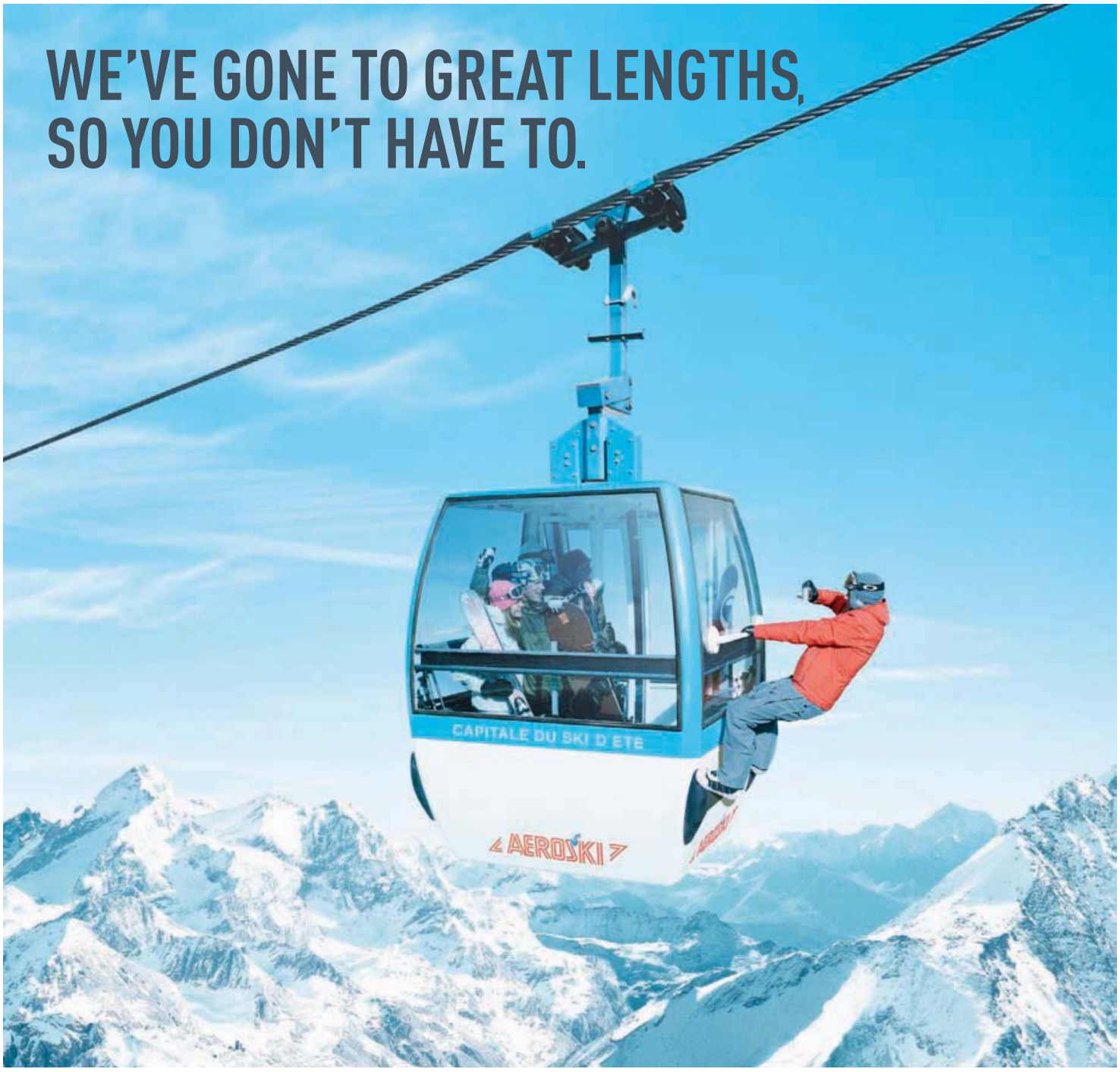
A face-focusing system is additionally on hand to automatically detect and illuminate faces within a frame. The camera will hit stores later this month priced £199, alongside a lower-cost version dubbed the **S7**. Full details can be found at **www.sanyo.co.uk**

All at sea

Olympus is sponsoring an attempt to smash the world record for rowing across the Atlantic Ocean in winter.

The feat, which will be recorded using the waterproof and shockproof [mju:] 725 SW digital camera, is being attempted by team Atlantic '06, made up of British hopefuls Stu Turnbull and Ed Baylis. Neither have any real rowing experience, but they have varied sporting and adventurous pasts including a 150-mile self-supported foot race through +50°C in the Egyptian Sahara and collecting two Blues at Oxford University for Rugby League. As well as setting a new record, their second challenge is to raise almost a quarter of a million pounds for Cancer Research UK.

The athletes will be taking pictures of their voyage using the [mju:] 725 SW and plan to send pictures and videos back to their website: **www.atlantico6.com**



LUMIX DMC-FX07

ULTRA COMPACT CAMERA WITH 28mm WIDE-ANGLE LENS

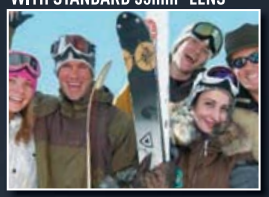
Also available in black.

Can't fit everyone into the picture? Not a problem with our sleekly designed FX07 and its Leica DC Vario-Elmarit 3.6x wide-angle zoom lens. It ensures you don't have to go to great lengths (or heights) to get great shots.

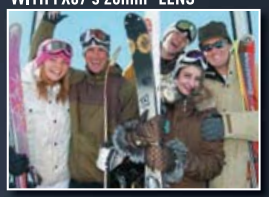
And for that timeless photo, we've not just squeezed in 7.2 megapixels and a 2.5" viewing screen. Our Optical Image Stabiliser combined with Intelligent ISO setting also avoids blur in low light and that washed-out look when using flash.

Find out what great lengths we go to with our cameras at www.panasonic.co.uk/lumix or call 08705 357 357

WITH STANDARD 35mm* LENS



WITH FX07's 28mm* LENS



THE LUMIX DIFFERENCE

Panasonic
ideas for life

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CANON 400D v NIKON D80

head to head

FACE OFF

WE DEMAND SATISFACTION

Among the batch of 10MP models announced or released recently, the most popular are sure to be those from Canon and Nikon, the two most popular brands. Despite other manufacturers' designs on world domination, the heritage of Nikon and Canon is still the strongest, and it's going to be difficult to break that duopoly. Although both cameras have 10MP sensors, and share many other similarities, they each have distinctive characteristics, and it's these differences that we will be examining in more detail.

As for the similarities, we'll take many of these as read – shutter speeds, interface, flash and so on. All that information is found in the specification lists within these pages.

Ultimately what we want to know is, by combining the overall specification, design, performance and image quality, which is the best camera for you to buy?

Which is better – the Nikon D80 or the Canon EOS 400D? **Jamie Harrison** hands out the duelling pistols for a dawn showdown between these two 10-megapixel DSLRS...

Canon EOS 400D

The successor to the tremendously popular EOS 350D, this is Canon's entry-level model, with a 10MP CMOS sensor that ups the 8MP count of its predecessor. Canon has added some features to give users a reason to upgrade (other than the small resolution hike), notably a new three-way sensor cleaning system, faster shooting speed and Picture Styles, which follows on from the higher-end 5D and 30D models. There's also a new AF system and a larger, single LCD replacing the dual LCD system of old.

The key standout feature after the sensor is the sensor cleaning. Canon has tackled this in three ways, firstly with an anti-static coating on the sensor itself. When a camera is turned on the charge in the sensor generates static, which attracts particles. This is why we always recommend switching off your camera before changing lenses. The anti-static coating reduces this problem. Secondly, at start up and shut down, the low pass filter that covers the sensor vibrates to dislodge any dust on the sensor.

The third solution is software based. A picture of a clean area, say a white wall or piece of card, is photographed. The processor maps the resulting image and recognises any dust that is present. The Canon software then removes the impurities, automatically when you open the image – like an auto Clone tool, if you will.

Regular readers will know that dust removal isn't a particularly new development. Several manufacturers have similar solutions – Olympus, Sony and the upcoming Pentax K10D (soon to be tested by WDC) all have variants. It's the first time we've seen it on a Canon, and the most comprehensive system to date.

From the EOS 30D comes an updated AF system, with 9 individually selectable AF points, and a bright f/2.8 central viewfinder area for better focusing in low light, with compatible lenses. Canon has also upped the processing speed and buffer, with the camera quoted as allowing 27 frames of continuous shooting at 3fps.

Also from the higher-end models, Canon has now included its Picture Style in-camera adjustment system, with a range of adjustable settings for portraits and landscapes among others, plus manual options. This is in addition to the usual set of scene modes. The PictureStyle menu is now quickly accessed via the central 'set' button in the D-Pad.

Canon has augmented these features with easier ways to print directly from the camera, with a one-touch print button on the camera body, which supports both Canon's own DirectPrint system as well as the now-standard PictBridge protocol.

Canon SPECS

PRICE £650 Body Only
SENSOR APS-C size CMOS, 22.2 x 14.8mm, 10.5MP total / 10.1MP effective / 3888 x 2592 pixels
MAX PRINT SIZE 19.5 x 13in@ 200dpi
LENS Interchangeable Canon EF/EF-S mount
SHUTTER SPEEDS 30-1/4000sec & Bulb
ISO 100-800 +2EV boost
EXP MODES Auto, P,A,S,M, 6sc, Picture Style, A-dep, ±2 EV
FLASH Built-in GN12m@ISO100, Hotshoe
DRIVE MODES Single, Continuous 3fps (27 JPEG / 10 RAW)
METER 35-zone TTL evaluative, with AF point linking, 9% partial and centreweighted average
WHITE BALANCE Auto, custom, 7 presets, colour temperature settings, ±3 bracketing, ±9 stop correction
COLOUR MODES sRGB, Adobe RGB
FOCUS 9 selectable point AF system, wide AF, auto point AF, M
VIEWFINDER Optical pentaprism with 95% coverage
MONITOR 2.5in LCD, 230,000 pixels
CONNECTION USB 2.0
REC FORMAT JPEG, RAW (CR2)
POWER Li-ion
STORAGE CF I&II
DIMENSIONS 126.5 x 94.2 x 65mm
WEIGHT 510g

Nikon D80

Nikon has taken a somewhat different approach to the D80 than Canon has with the 400D. The camera has inherited much of the technology of the D200, so the updates and new features are more enhancements and refinements of technology, rather than Canon's big bold statements and additions.

That's not to say this is just a D70s with a higher populated sensor. There's a new processor too, with a larger buffer and faster processing power to enable 27 JPEG frames of continuous shooting at 3fps . The processor also offers better colour and tonal gradations than previously.

Nikon has added its well-regarded Colour Matrix Metering II, first seen on the D200, then on the D50, which uses colour analysis as well as luminance to determine accurate exposure. The exposure system is backed up with ±5EV compensation, while the sensitivity range covers ISO 100-1600, selectable in 1/3-stop increments. White Balance is comprehensive as well, with full image area WB measurements, and manual options as well as the standard presets.

Like Canon, Nikon has upped the ante of the auto focus, with 11 individually selectable AF points, again taking its cue from the D200.

Nikon has also added more in the way of in-camera editing, but differently to Canon. While Canon allows you to adjust contrast and colour etc at the image taking stage, Nikon allows post capture editing. Among the retouching options are a range of digital filters that replicate the effect of warm-up or skylight filters, for example. You can also adjust the colour balance or make an image monochrome. The camera applies the changes to a new file, so the original remains intact. Of course there are still the standard capture adjustments and scene modes. Nikon has also added its effective D-Lighting feature which balances the foreground and background densities, similar to Photoshop's Highlight and Shadow tool, to reduce contrast or compensate for backlighting. Again this is a retroactive feature.

Along a similar vein is the D80's level of noise control, with a long exposure noise-reduction feature. There's nothing unusual in that – but it's supplemented with three levels of control over high sensitivity noise. This may be something people prefer to fix in Photoshop, but it's useful for PictBridge and JPEG, or non-critical images.

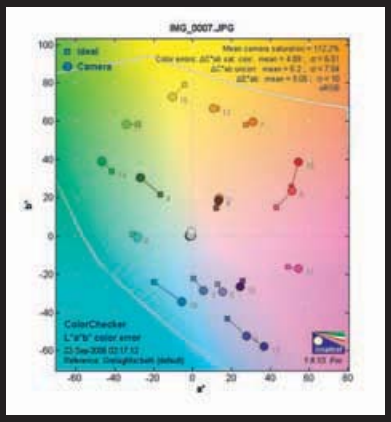
An interesting but somewhat niche feature of the D80 is the multiple exposure option, allowing up to three exposures to be made over one frame – something film users are no doubt familiar with, but a rare feature on DSLRs.

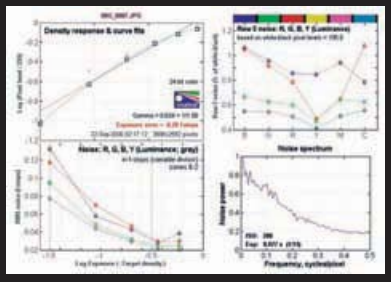
Nikon SPECS

PRICE £699 Body only
SENSOR DX Format CCD, 23.6 x 15.8mm, 10.8MP total / 10.2MP effective / 3872 x 2592 pixels
MAX PRINT SIZE 19.4 x 13in @200dpi
LENS Nikon
SHUTTER SPEEDS 30-1/4000sec and Bulb
ISO 100-1600 in 1/3 stop increments & 1EV boost
EXP MODES Auto, P, A, S, M, 6 Sc, ±5EV
FLASH Built-in GN13m@ISO 100, Hotshoe
DRIVE MODES Single, Continuous 3fps (27 JPEG)
METER 3D Colour Matrix Metering II, centreweighted average, spot
WHITE BALANCE Manual, Auto, presets, Kelvin scale
COLOUR MODES sRGB x2, Adobe RGB
FOCUS 11-point individual, selectable and dynamic AF, wide area AF, single and continuous, AF Illuminator
VIEWFINDER Reflex viewfinder with 95% coverage
MONITOR 2.5in LCD, 230,000 pixels
CONNECTION USB 2.0
REC FORMAT JPEG, RAW, RAW+ JPEG
POWER Li-Ion
STORAGE SD
DIMENSIONS 132 x 103 x 77mm
WEIGHT 585g

Design and PERFORMANCE

Canon EOS 400D





LAB TEST CHARTS
Top: Canon gives lower saturation, but some blues are slightly warmer than they should be. **Middle:** The Canon shows a very different level of blue channel noise, with odd spikes – showing the difference between CCD and CMOS. **Bottom:** White Balance chart. The 400D's white balance performance is exceptional.

The lighter and smaller of the two, Canon has nevertheless made good use of the real estate to provide fingertip control without overburdening the camera with buttons. The left side of the top plate is empty of any controls at all, while the mode dial, power switch, command dial and shutter release are all based on the right. The majority of the camera's controls are on the back of the camera, which is dominated by the bright 2.5in LCD. A circular five-button set allows navigation of the menus, as well as allowing fast access to metering modes, white balance options, ISO speeds and AF modes. The central button, for the first time, acts as both the 'set' button and gives access to Picture Style options.

The purchase around the right grip is a little tighter than that of the D80; my fingernails rub against the lens mount housing on the front of the camera, leaving some scratching on the plastic cover – something I'm sure would look even worse after continued use. Furthermore the shallow depth of the camera forces my little finger to curve beneath the body, which I find slightly uncomfortable. There's a nicely shaped ergonomic thumb rest on the back though, which helps to provide comfort and, thanks to a rubber thumb pad, a more reassuring grip.

The most notable aspect of the Canon over the Nikon is on the LCD. Canon has followed the design precedents set by Olympus and Konica Minolta/Sony to include the shooting information on the main LCD, when in shooting mode. This is a lot brighter than a grey LCD, and easier to see in the dark. The information is also bigger, so easier to read for long-sighted users. Proximity sensors beneath the viewfinder shut the screen down when the camera is placed to the eye. As an aside, while I like this system, I think Olympus and Konica Minolta (or Sony) do it better – especially Sony's self-orientating version.

Canon has revamped the AF module in this model, with 11 AF points, which react quickly and accurately. They can be set individually by pressing the AF point selection button and rotating the front command dial. For individual points, this means you have to go round the points until you get to the one you want, which can be a bit slow and annoying. As the selections are made they can be viewed through the viewfinder, or as a large and bright icon on the LCD.

Nikon *D80*

If you prefer a bigger, chunkier camera, the Nikon D80 is worth considering. Weighing in at 585g without lens and battery, compared to the Canon 400D's 510g it doesn't seem all that much difference, but the Nikon lens is sturdier and increases that weight difference still further. The additional size of the camera personally suits my hand size better, so feels much more comfortable than the EOS 400D. This is especially true around the right-hand grip, which has plenty of space for a full hand of fingers, while the rubberised coating provides a tactile and secure grip. There's also a small raised area on the back to accommodate the thumb, which is less pronounced than that of the Canon but effective nonetheless.

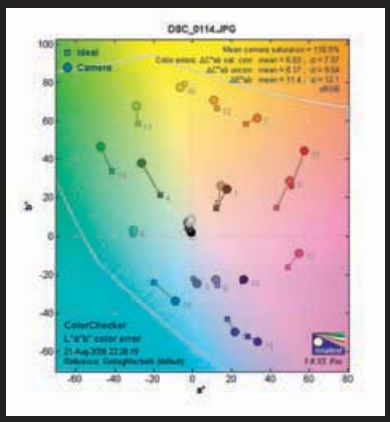
Camera start-up time is marginally faster than that of the Canon, thanks to the lack of dust control – is that split second more important than a dust- free sensor, though?

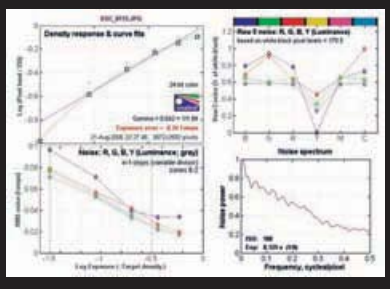
Nikon has incorporated more control onto the camera top plate, so the back of the camera is slightly less cluttered than the Canon. The exposure mode dial is to the left of the pentaprism, with a grey LCD to the right displaying exposure information. I'm going out on a limb here, but I prefer the Canon LCD system, as I said earlier. The D80's grey LCD is dim and requires a light to be switched on in dark conditions. Also on the top plate are the power switch, shutter release buttons and a group of buttons for the metering modes, EV compensation, drive modes and AF servo modes.

The D80 uses a pair of command dials, rear and front for changing some mode options and for setting aperture and shutter. I prefer this to the Canon method of using the EV Comp button/ front dial combo to control aperture, which is fiddly. On the other hand you have to remember which dial does what.

The 11 AF points can be individually selected by a four-way thumb-pad on the back of the camera. I like this option, though I think the button's a little soft, and it can be locked, which is useful. The AF selection point needs to be changed in the menu, which is a bit slower – an external button would be useful. The AF is quick and responsive, though the AF assist light can be quite blinding for a living subject. It can be turned off the menu, but this slows down the AF somewhat.

Another positive for the Nikon is the large bright viewfinder, which beats the Canon hands down – it's the best in its class at the present time.





LAB TEST CHARTS
Top: Nikon shows more overall saturation, with slightly warmer tones.
Middle: Grey noise levels are similar. the Nikon's is marginally lower overall, but Nikon produces lower colour noise overall.
Bottom: The D80 shows acceptable WB error, but fares slightly worse than the Canon.

image QUALITY

Canon images

House: Despite the lower saturation displayed in the lab tests, the Canon has more warmth in the reds.
Leaves: This magnified edge section shows lots of fringing, mainly due to the cheaper standard kit lens.
Pencils: Canon's AF focused too low in the image for my liking. Exposure is also a little under, but colour is good.

Canon EOS 400D

Exposure and Sharpness

On the whole, the Canon exposures are very good, but there are times when the pattern metering gets it wrong and underexposes – sometimes by up to one stop. This is especially obvious in the RAW images, though the camera does compensate to a small degree in the JPEGs. In most average scenes, the camera copes, and it's when there's a lot of contrast or backlighting that the biggest problems seem to arise.

Sharpness is generally good, but bear in mind that the kit lens with the Canon is cheaper than the Nikon's and it shows. Canon makes some excellent lenses, and it's worth spending a little extra dosh to get the added detail and sharpness that the 10MP sensor can offer. As an added incentive to buy a decent lens, the fringing caused by the 18-55mm kit lens is quite horrible, especially in the corners.

Colour and White Balance

While the JPEGs offer an increase of saturation, it is less than the Nikon D80, at 112%. Similarly the auto white balance is much closer to neutral when measured using the Imatest software. However blues are more saturated than the Nikon, and on the whole the real-world images look warmer in hue than those from the Nikon, despite technical tests showing otherwise. This is probably due to the added warmth in some tones, such as the blues, when overly warm skies can make images look warmer overall.

Noise

On the measured charts the Canon 400D shows less noise than the Nikon, but there is a markedly higher chroma noise level than the luminance noise baseline, particularly in the blue channel. This can be seen when the channel is viewed separately, with a much coarser level than that of the D80, despite lower recorded levels. Incidentally the CMOS sensor and/or processor combination produces a spikier graph than that of CCD-based cameras such as the D80.

Nikon D80

Exposure and Sharpness

Nikon's metering system appears much more reliable than Canon's for the most part. Comparing the histograms shows Nikon to err more towards slight overexposure – leading to some lost highlight detail, particularly in JPEGs, but generally the Nikon images are consistently well exposed. It's still not a perfect all round system though, and there will still be times when human knowledge or experience needs to be used to ensure accurate exposure, either using exposure compensation for high-key or low-key subjects or using an alternative metering mode for trickier subjects.

Similarly the kit lens is sharper than the 400D's, with more edge detail and noticeably less chromatic aberration.

Colour and White Balance

On the screen and page, the Nikon colour appears cooler and more natural than the Canon, despite the technical tests showing the opposite with saturation at 118% and much warmer reds. However the neutral tones show a bias towards slight coolness, which overall should give a more neutral look anyway.

White Balance is within the bounds of what's acceptable, but there is a greater margin of error than the Canon's with some images appearing too cool and some too warm. The tests show a much wider range of error across the Gretag Macbeth colour patches too.

Noise

Despite having a slightly higher recorded level of noise, the Nikon D80 does a much better job of hiding it, especially as the noise graphs follow a much closer pattern across the charts. Visually this means that noise doesn't particularly stand out in the images – certainly in the lower ISO regions at least. As gain is raised, of course there is a higher noise level, but Nikon has much better blue channel control and the overall level appears low and smooth.

Nikon images

House: The Nikon overexposed this shot, with half a stop difference between the two models.
Leaves: The superiority of the Nikon lens is ably demonstrated here, by the lack of fringing.
Pencils: Nikon's AF chose the central area for focus, and exposure is about right. Colours are very good.

Conclusion

Both manufacturers have done themselves proud with these two models and use of these and other 10MP models this year certainly points to these two as the pick of the crop thus far.

In many ways the models are very different – the EOS 400D is still classed as Canon's entry-level model, as it's the lowest-specified and priced of the Canon SLRs, while Nikon has the D50 and D40 below the D80.

Both models have also made use of the newer technology from the mid-range and higher models, meaning that they are still better specified than some of their competitors.

Canon has made gains in its use of new (at least for Canon) technology and if sensor dust is a big issue to you, this will be an appealing feature. Similarly the newly designed LCD readout is, I believe, a better system than the small grey LCD readout of the Nikon.

Overall though, I prefer the handling and general chunkiness of the Nikon. The autofocus system seems better too, though I'm not a fan of the blinding AF assist light. The Nikon just feels more comfortable, and has a better layout in many ways.

As for image quality, this too is a mixed bag and neither camera is an out-and-out winner. The Canon may have lower noise levels, but the balance of the noise is uneven, so can appear more noisy. This is hampered by the increased instances of the dreaded purple fringing with the 18-55mm lens that we tested the camera with.

Almost unforgivable though is the greater number of incorrect exposures made by the 400D, with often a stop difference between the two cameras. This is a fundamental issue, so Canon must lose serious brownie points.

By comparison the differences in colour balance are small, as are the noise issues. For that reason, after a steward's enquiry and a study of the photofinish, Nikon scrapes to the top by a gnat's whisker.

SIGMA

OUR WORLD

In the Niger Delta, even routine cooking looks extraordinary.
ED KASHI: Born in 1957 in New York. Earned a degree in photojournalism at Syracuse University. Photographed in more than 60 countries. Received numerous awards for a wide range of work. Photographs appeared in National Geographic magazine, among many other publications. Photo data: SIGMA 10-20mm F4-5.6 EX DC HSM, 1/250 second exposure at f13.

ED KASHI SHOOTS THE WORLD WITH A SIGMA LENS

The ultra-wide angle capabilities of this Sigma lens open up new possibilities to digital photographers. The image circle of the lens is specially designed to suit digital SLRs with APS-C size sensors. Special Low Dispersion (SLD) glass and aspheric lens elements correct aberrations for clear, distinctive image quality at all times and allows a minimum focusing distance of 24cm (9.4inches) throughout the entire zoom range. The Hyper Sonic Motor (HSM) provides silent, responsive auto-focus with full-time manual focus override. This compact lens is finished to advanced EX standards and comes complete with a matched petal-shaped lens hood.

FOR DIGITAL

This affordable, extraordinary ultra-wide-angle zoom lens will transform your photography.

SIGMA 10-20mm F4-5.6 EX DC HSM

Available for: Sigma SA, Canon EOS and Nikon-D digital SLRs.

*Vignetting (a darkening of the corners of the image) will occur if the lens is used with digital SLR cameras with image sensors larger than APS-C size or 35mm SLRs, and APS SLRs

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SAMSUNG NV3

7 mega pixels **3**x zoom

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back view

The 2.5inch TFT LCD dominates the rear of the camera; leaving enough space for a four-way control pad, zoom lever and other discrete controls

top view

Stereo speakers are an unusual addition to this view of the camera, accompanied by a mode dial, power switch and shutter release button

side view

As the camera is slim, there are few points of interest on the side of the camera save for a headphone socket and wrist strap loop

quick *specs*

- **SENSOR** 1/25" CCD, 7.2MP effective
- **LENS** 38-114mm, f3.5-4.5
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 2-1/2000
- **ISO** A, 80, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1000
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, P, 11 scene modes
- **FLASH** 0.3m – 3.4m (W), 0.5m-2.5m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5" TFT LCD
- **OTHER** SD, 15MB int, MP3 playback, stereo speakers, voice record function, 10 filters
- **POWER** Li-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 94.5 x 57 x 17.5mm

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Appealing stylish design combined with effective multimedia functions. Quick to start up and extremely easy to use.

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Trendy design may not be to all tastes. Imaging specifications appear to suffer at the expense of multimedia functionality.

the *scores*

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	17

83%

up *against*

FUJI Z2

TURN TO OUR BUYING GUIDE ON PAGE 130
FOR INDIVIDUAL CAMERA SPECIFICATIONS

Samsung NV3

Samsung's new vision in media on the move

Tested by *Natalie Hitchins* **£229** www.samsung.co.uk

For a company famed for its super-stylish TVs and mobile phones, Samsung's cameras have always been a comparative disappointment. That all looks set to change with the launch of the new NV series; a trio of multi-functional digicams with slinky all-metal exteriors.

FEATURES

As the entry-level model of the trio, the NV3 offers a relatively healthy choice of functions. In addition to Automatic and Program operation, there are 11 scene pre-sets, including Children, Sunset and Dawn. A further notch on the mode dial offers Advanced Shake Reduction, a software-based feature that aims to reduce blurring. Essential shooting specs include two AF modes (single point and multi), three quality settings and two metering modes. Multi-media enthusiasts will also be pleased to see a text viewer, MP3 player and voice recording, supported by stereo speakers.

DESIGN

Smouldering in black with blue detailing, the NV3 offers style in a package slimline enough to slide into a pocket. The lens, however, is positioned so far to one side that it's all too easy for fingers to stray in front, while the space where you'd expect to find the shutter release button is occupied by a speaker. Apart from these quirks, the NV3 is basically well designed with nicely spaced, hardy controls.

PERFORMANCE

Startup speed is near-instantaneous, while shot-to-shot times lag at about two seconds. Focusing is a bit sluggish, and when ASR or Wise Shot mode are activated, processing times delay further. In all other respects, the NV3 is a sparky and responsive model with few operational problems.

VALUE

Taking the camera and its multimedia functions as a whole, the Samsung NV3 offers decent value. However, those photographers looking for image quality to match design style may be better off buying more-accomplished offerings from Sony or Fujifilm.

VERDICT

Although imaging quality and features are not much to write home about, as a digital lifestyle accessory the NV3 is an innovative and effective package at a price point that just about fits the features on offer. **WDC**

image *quality*

Noise is well controlled but noticeable over ISO 400, but in this respect the NV3 does not have much more trouble than many other cameras at this price point. Images are generally colourful and bold, if a little blemished by a general tendency to underexpose. When AF hits the right target, images show clean edges and a good level of detail. Low-light conditions present more of a problem, recommending this camera to everyday snappers rather than creative enthusiasts.

Images from the Samsung NV3 are generally bold and colouful
• Download this and other test images on the website

NIKON COOLPIX S10

6 mega pixels 10x zoom

360° VIRTUAL TOUR & TEST IMAGES ONLY ON THE WEB
www.whatdigitalcamera.com

back view

The lens barrel and LCD leave little room for clutter. There are just four control buttons and a tiny control pad for menu navigation

top view

Here lies the shutter release and zoom lever control. This placement means fingers have to switch between focusing and zoom

side view

There are few points of interest on the side of the camera except a wrist strap loop and A/V out connection

Nikon CoolPix S10

A swivel lens Superzoom from industry stalwart Nikon

Tested by *Natalie Hitchins* **£299** www.nikon.co.uk

On its 2005 release, Nikon's S4 camera was one of the smallest 10x optical zoom models available. Its proportions have now been well and truly beaten by Panasonic's TZ1, so as Nikon releases the S4's near-identical Coolpix S10 replacement we ask: does the swivel lens Superzoom still have what it takes to turn heads in this competitive corner of the market?

FEATURES

Taking pride of place is the camera's 10x optical zoom lens (38-380mm equivalent). Attached with a swivel hinge, this not only allows the camera to be rotated 270 degrees but also to sit flat against the camera body when not in use. The lens is additionally supported by Nikon's stabilising VR technology, activiated via an on body control. Additional key specs include a 6MP 1/25in CCD, 14 scene modes and a 2.5in LCD screen, provided at the expense of a viewfinder.

DESIGN

You'll either love or hate this unorthodox design, but there's no doubt that the swivel lens is a space saver, and enables easy composition from challenging angles. It's hardly compact in the traditional sense of the word, but its shallow depth and smooth edges make it more pocketable than a bridge camera.

PERFORMANCE

Start up time clocks in at over a second and a half, but shot-to-shot and shutter lag are generally OK, except in very low light. Zoom is a tad slow, a trait aided by the small top-mounted lever control that forces the finger to switch between the shutter release and zoom. Despite such quirks, during capture the S10 generally continues Nikon's tradition of producing cameras with sound exposure and focusing systems.

VALUE

While we'd like to have seen a few more specification enhancements in this S4 upgrade, the S10 offers a fair amount for this price point, especially in terms of optical performance.

VERDICT

It may not be for everyone, but the S10 provides a good-value compromise between traditional compact and Superzoom cameras. User-friendly and versatile, the S10 combines crisp, reliable imaging with good quality features. **WDC**

quick *specs*

- **SENSOR** 6.18 MP, 1/2.5-inch
- **LENS** 6.3-63mm (38-380mm) F/3.5
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 2-1/1000 sec
- **ISO** Auto, 50-800
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, 14 scene modes
- **FLASH** 0.3-5.4 (W) 1-5.4m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in, 230,000 pixels LCD
- **OTHER** SD, 16MB into, VR stabilisation, 30fps movies
- **POWER** 2x AA cells
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 67 x 26 x 67mm/220g

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
VR mode and face detection; versatile handling; good level of image quality; optical ability

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Unwieldy body style; poor zoom control; lack of viewfinder; there are few standout features aside from zoom

the *scores*

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	17

85%

image *quality*

The S10 offers no manual exposure modes, but the S10's 256-segment metering linked to manually selectable or automatic focusing points produce even exposures which barely falter in diverse lighting conditions. Colour rendition is accurate, while the lens manages to pick up a promising level of detail at both extremes of the lens' focal range. There is some loss of detail in high-contrast scenes, although nothing that causes great concern. An inevitable increase in noise over ISO 400 detracts from an otherwise solid imaging performance.

The S10's 10x lens is capable of reproducing clean edge details
• Download this and other test images on the website

up *against*

PANASONIC TZ1

TURN TO OUR EXTENSIVE BUYING GUIDE STARTING ON PAGE 34 OVER 71 PAGES

KODAK EASYSHARE V705

7 mega pixels **5x zoom**

quick specs

- **SENSOR** 7.1MP, 1/2.5in. CCD
- **LENS** 23mm f/2.8, 39-117mm f/3.9-4.4
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 8-1/1448 sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, Custom, 20 scene
- **ISO** Auto, 50, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1000
- **FLASH** 3.1m (W), 2m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in 230,000 pixels
- **OTHER** 32MB int, SD/MMC, 30fps movies
- **POWER** Li-ion
- **SIZE/ WEIGHT** 101 x 49.8 x 20.4mm/ 124g

what we think

WHAT WE LIKE: Ultra-wide angle lens, slim line, user-friendly

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: No viewfinder, overprocessed images, fiddly body controls

the scores

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Speed, metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	16

84%

Kodak EasyShare V705

Two's company for Kodak's latest dual-lens camera

Tested by *Natalie Hitchins* **£279** www.kodak.co.uk

Billed as the smallest ultra-wideangle optical zoom digital camera, the V705 joins Kodak's three-strong series of dual-lens cameras.

FEATURES The two lenses combine a wide 23mm fixed (35mm equiv.) f/2.8 lens with a 39-117mm (35mm equiv.) f/3.9–f/4.4 version. As a result the camera offers a 5x optical zoom range, in addition to two 7MP sensors. A 2.5in LCD, 20 scene modes and software-based blur-reduction are all on hand.

DESIGN Cast in a metal mould, the V705 oozes style in a slim body scattered with responsive controls. The lack of a viewfinder is unfortunate, given the extra compositional possibilities.

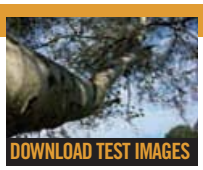
PERFORMANCE The V705 is quick to spring to life and benefits from a pleasingly swift shutter mechanism. Focusing is especially responsive, although the zoom tends to drag.

IMAGE QUALITY Images are extremely saturated in bright conditions. This, combined with cleanly reproduced details and fair-handed exposure, adds up to a camera that will appeal to users seeking attractive rather than realistic images. In more challenging lighting conditions images deteriorate and are a little too processed, but the V705 generally compares well at this price point.

VALUE This well-crafted camera offers bags of style and versatile shooting specifications. Despite some minor imaging issues, the camera is good value.

VERDICT

Intuitive and easy-to-use, the V705 is an enhanced point-and-shooter that'll suit photographers seeking an enhanced focal range. **WDC**



CANON POWERSHOT A430

4 mega pixels **4x zoom**

quick specs

- **SENSOR** 4MP effective, 1/3" CCD
- **LENS** 5.4-21.6mm (39-156mm) f/2.8-5.8
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 1-1/2000sec
- **ISO** Auto, 64-400
- **EXP MODES** Auto, M, 7 Sc, Stitch Assist, Mov
- **FLASH** 3.0m (W) 2.0m(T)
- **VIEWFINDER** Yes
- **MONITOR** 1.8in LCD, 77,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD memory, 4 colours (silver, gold, red or blue)
- **POWER** AA batteries (2)
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 103 x 52 x 40mm / 160g

what we think

WHAT WE LIKE: Ease of use, choice of colours, image quality (in good light)

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Small screen, noise at ISO 400, poor in low light

the scores

FEATURES Specifications, controls	15
DESIGN Handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Speed, metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	18

81%

Canon PowerShot A430

No-nonsense compact with four colour options

Tested by *Chris Gatcum* **£129** www.canon.co.uk

Compact, affordable and incredibly easy' – that's how Canon describes the PowerShot A430 and, having tested it, it's hard to argue.

FEATURES The A430 may only have a 4MP sensor, but its zoom covers most shooting opportunities, as does the modest ISO speed range. An added benefit is the Digic II processing engine inherited from Canon's more-expensive PowerShot models.

DESIGN A chunky little camera, the A430 is available with a silver, gold, red or blue façade. It may not have the largest LCD screen around, but the optical viewfinder makes up for this and leaves space for large, clearly labelled controls on the back.

PERFORMANCE The name of the A430 game is 'ease of use' – simply select automatic or one of the scene modes, point it in the right direction and shoot. The manual mode offers a little more control as your experience grows.

IMAGE QUALITY As long as you've got good light – or use flash – the A430 turns in well-exposed, sharp pictures with no colour shifts and minimal fringing. But when light levels drop images get messy very quickly – the noise at ISO 400 is severe.

VALUE This no-nonsense camera at a no-nonsense price would be great for the younger photographer.

VERDICT

The A430 isn't the cheapest entry-level camera available, nor does it have the highest specification, but when there's plenty of light it delivers good image quality. **WDC**

Want natural beauty?

Get a fast standard zoom with a wider angle

With its fast F/2.8 throughout the range, this sophisticated lens delivers faster shutter speeds and beautiful portraits with a natural, soft-focus background effect. Remarkably lightweight and compact for its specs, the 17mm* focal length offers a wider angle of view than ordinary standard zoom lenses.
*26mm-78mm range when converted to the 35mm film format.

For Digital with smaller-size imagers

SP AF17-50mm F/2.8 XR Di LD Aspherical [IF]

[Equivalent to 26-78mm*] *When converted to 35mm film format.

50mm (Equivalent to 78mm) Exposure: Aperture fully opened Auto ISO400 WB: Auto
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LEICA D-LUX 3

10 mega pixels **4**x zoom

360° VIRTUAL TOUR & TEST IMAGES ONLY ON THE WEB
www.whatdigitalcamera.com

back view

The back of the D-Lux 3 is dominated by a 2.8in LCD, but there's still plenty of space for a neat array of controls

top view

A DSLR-style dial lets you choose one of the many shooting modes, with a switch on top of the lens setting the picture format

side view

Because of its minimal styling there's not much to see on the side of the D-Lux 3 – the focusing mode is set on the lens

Leica D-Lux 3

Widescreen photography for the panoramic enthusiast

Tested by *Chris Gatcum* **£490** www.leica.co.uk

quick *specs*

- **SENSOR** 10MP effective, 1/1.65in CCD
- **LENS** 6.3-25.2mm (28-112mm) f/2.8-4.9
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 60-1/2000sec
- **ISO** Auto, 100-1600
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, P, A, S, M, 17 Sc, Mov
- **FLASH** 4.1m (W) 2.3m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.8in LCD (16:9 format) 207,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, Image Stabiliser, Leather case
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 106 x 58 x 25.5mm/ 185g

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
16:9 picture format; minimal design and aluminium body; 'retro' brown leather case

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
'Mushy' detail & colour loss at ISO 400 and above; price

the *scores*

FEATURES	Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN	Build, handling, ease of use	19
PERFORMANCE	Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY	Sharpness, colour etc	14
VALUE	Based on RRP	15

83%

up *against*

PANASONIC DMC-LX2

TURN TO PAGE 39 FOR OUR EXTENSIVE BUYING GUIDE OVER 67 PAGES

Leica is a name synonymous with high quality, and the company's partnership with Panasonic has enabled it to bring some exciting high-end digital products to market. Among these is the D-Lux 3, with a unique 16:9 'widescreen' format sensor.

FEATURES

The D-Lux 3 has a wider-than-most, 28-112mm equivalent, DC Vario-Elmarit zoom with a fast f/2.8 maximum aperture at its widest setting. You also get Mega O.I.S stabilisation technology (courtesy of Panasonic), which allows you to handhold the camera under a wider range of lighting conditions without introducing camera shake.

As well as 16:9 format panoramic images, you can shoot more-conventional 3:2 and 4:3 format frames, though this reduces the resolution to 8.5MP and 7.5MP respectively. With the ability to shoot raw, as well as JPEG, an ISO range running from 100-1600 and a full gamut of 'proper' metering and exposure modes (in addition to automatic and 17 scene modes) the D-Lux 3 is about as sophisticated as compact cameras come.

DESIGN

With a minimalist satin-black aluminium body and classic red Leica roundel, the D-Lux 3 oozes style. The widescreen 2.8in LCD on the back means there isn't much space for the controls, so most of the photographic options are menu-based. What few buttons it has are neatly spread to the right of the screen, and within easy reach of a roving thumb. You set the picture format on top of the lens.

PERFORMANCE

It takes just over a second for the D-Lux 3 to unfurl its Leica optic, and the focusing speed using the general nine-area focusing is also swift. It can be made faster still by choosing three focus areas, or even a single AF point. There's no viewfinder, and it isn't greatly missed. When LCD screen-glare is encountered there's a 'power LCD' option to boost the screen intensity and a 'high angle' mode to prevent the screen from whiting out.

VALUE

The Leica D-Lux 3 costs over £100 more than the Panasonic LX2 (£379.99), but in return you get a sublime design, a gorgeous leather case and – purely because it's a Leica – a much higher price if you ever want to part with it.

VERDICT

The beautiful design and Leica name will be enough to sell the D-Lux 3 to those with deep enough pockets, but ultimately the looks simply aren't matched by the image quality. **WDC**

image *quality*

Images from the D-Lux 3 show negligible corner shading, while distortion is reasonable, and the exposures and colour are great. However, at ISO 400 and above aggressive noise reduction removes the colour from fine detail and reduces edge definition, resulting in a 'watercolour painting' effect. Sticking to ISO 100 – or ISO 200 at a push – is highly recommended.

Good quality at ISO 100; high noise reduction at 400 lets it down
• Download this and other test images on the website

ACCESSORIES
software & hardware

We test the latest kit to improve your photography

HP Photosmart A618

£152

www.hp.co.uk

This mini printer offers panoramic prints too. We put it through its paces

TYPE: Compact inkjet printer **PRINT SIZE:** 6x4, 5x7, 4x12in **INKS:** C,M,Y **RESOLUTION:** 4800dpi **CONNECTION:** USB, Pictbridge, Card slots

If you're looking for a portable inkjet printer, then HP's Photosmart A618 is certainly worth a closer look, with an optional battery pack and carry-bag making the printer the perfect partner at a party, a wedding, or even on holiday.

Using HP's fade-resistant Vivera inks, prints can be made on 6x4in and 5x7in papers, as well as 4x12in paper for 'pre-stitched' panoramic shots. Stickers, CD labels and a variety of other media is also compatible.

Just as there's a wide range of paper sizes to choose from, so there are numerous ways of getting your images to the printer to start with, be it from a memory card, via Pictbridge or simply hard-wiring the USB printer to your computer.

Reading both JPEG and TIFF files, images are displayed on the A618's flip-out 2.5in LCD screen, with a host of editing options as well as HP Photo Fix, a one-touch image optimisation system. When you're happy with your choices, pressing 'print' delivers you a 6x4in print in a little over a minute, with larger prints taking a fraction longer.

With a print resolution of up to 4800dpi, the A618's print quality is high in terms of detail, but the three-colour cartridge (cyan, magenta and yellow) means that getting a 'true' black isn't quite possible. With the exception of black & white photographs this isn't noticeable and you can expect clean skin tones, great greens in your landscapes, and beautiful blues in your summer skies.

There are a couple of flies in the HP ointment though, with a slight delay involved when loading high-resolution (7MP+) images, and a 20-sheet capacity meaning you have to keep reloading the printer during long print runs. However, the plus points far outweigh the minor niggles and, overall, the A618 is definitely one of the better compact inkjet printers on the market.

VERDICT

As a standalone compact printer capable of quickly knocking out 6x4in and 5x7in prints, the HP Photosmart A618 is a great product, with the added bonus of producing panoramic prints as well. Images can be imported from virtually any source and the intuitive menus and large LCD screen mean that it's simple to use. WDC

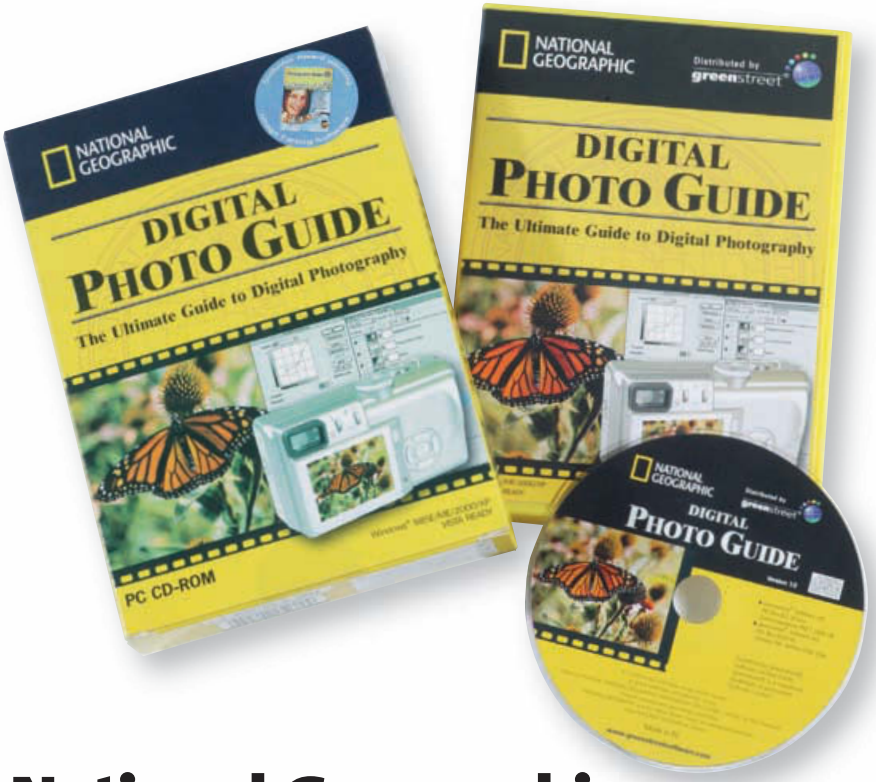
the scores

86%

17 features
18 ease of use
17 performance
17 results
17 value

WHAT WE *LIKE:*
Image quality, larger print sizes, ease of use

WHAT WE *DON'T LIKE:*
Only a 20-sheet capacity, delay in loading high-resolution images



National Geographic *Digital Photo Guide CD ROM*

OS: Win / Mac **£29.99**

When it comes to learning about digital photography and image editing, a CD ROM has plenty of advantages over the printed page because it allows videos to provide real-time demonstrations in addition to text and still images.

Unfortunately, with National Geographic's Digital Photo Guide, the practical techniques are few and far between, so the CD ROM relies on the written word and the content is largely 'theory' based.

There's an option to have an American narrator read the pages for you, but the chapters are rather brief, with a smattering of 'Americanisms' that often serve to confuse issues rather than clarify them. What is commonly known as the camera's 'aperture', for example, is referred to on the CD ROM as its 'focus'. The section on magazines only lists American publications too.

So while National Geographic's Digital Photo Guide had the potential to be an excellent alternative to a printed book, the fact that the multimedia technology hasn't been used to its full potential, and the content hasn't been tailored to a British audience, means it isn't quite the 'ultimate guide' it purports to be. **63%**

AutoMagic *CD-R*

REQUIREMENTS: Windows XP/2000 with CD recorder **www.orlogix.com**

STARTER KIT **£13.60** *(15 disks, quick start guide and CD pen)*

REFILL PACK **£23.80** *(50 disks)*

AutoMagic CD-R is a fresh take on CD burning, in that the required software (SoftR) is supplied on each and every disk. All you need do is insert a blank AutoMagic CD-R disk and the software automatically opens, leaving you to decide what type of information you're recording – photos, music, documents or 'other data' – before dragging and dropping your files into the recording window. When the disk is recorded and reinserted in your computer the SoftR software opens and runs as a browser.

While AutoMagic CD-R disks may cost a fraction more than 'ordinary' CD-Rs the straightforward, painless operation easily makes up for this. **86%**

Monster Pod

www.monster-pod.com

$29.95

First the Gorilla Pod and now the Monster Pod – it seems as if there's no end to 'alternative' camera support designs. The key to the Monster Pod lies in its unique 'Viscoelastic morphing polymer super grip' base, which literally sticks to any surface it's pressed against so you're never without a camera support. Whether you're out in the woods and want to stick it to a tree or simply want to rest it on a sloping wall, it will securely hold your camera in place; and once you've taken your shot you simply remove your camera from the 'Pod, put it back in its rigid case and move on. It's not quite up to holding a DSLR or heavyweight bridge camera vertically, but for gentler angles, or with a digital compact, it makes an effective impromptu support. **82%**

National Geographic Tundra Ball Head Tripod

(NGTT1)

£54.95

www.supporthexperience.com

Engineered by renowned tripod manufacturer Manfrotto, the NGTT1 makes a great travelling companion due to its light weight and compact size. The ball head allows you to quickly get your camera in position, with the adjustable legs getting you down to near-ground level (17cm) or up to 1.5 metres. A quick-release plate means your camera's always ready to be mounted, so when you're out and about there's no excuse for blurred shots. It's a bit too light to take a heavy DSLR and long lens, but for a standard DSR/lens combo it's ideal. **81%**

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DIGITAL SLR'S p39-73

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KEY SPECIFICATIONS
SENSOR: Type, size and pixel count
LENS: Focal length (equivalent in 35mm terms) and maximum aperture
SHUTTER SPEEDS: Highest and lowest
EXPOSURE MODES: Choice of **Auto**, Program (**P**), Aperture Priority (**A**), Shutter Priority (**S**), Manual (**M**) and **Scene** modes
ISO: Sensitivity range of the sensor
FLASH: **G**uide **N**umber (metres@ ISO100)
VIEWFINDER/MONITOR: Type/ Size of LCD in inches
OPT = optical viewfinder
EVF = electronic viewfinder
OTHER: Additional key features.
Int = Internal memory. **CF/SD/ xD/MS** indicate media card type
POWER: Type of battery supplied

VERDICT
Our overall opinion of the camera

PRICE
Average street price at time of going to press, according to Pricerunner.co.uk. Prices may vary. **RRP** = Recommended Retail Price at camera launch

VIEWS
What the camera looks like from other angles, with description of key buttons and functions

UP AGAINST
Key competitors to the tested model in terms of price and specification

SCORES
How the camera scored in five key areas of assessment, out of a maximum of 20 each

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PROS & CONS
The camera's best and worst features

BACK VIEW
With explanation of key buttons and functions

FINAL SCORE
The overall score, derived from the total achieved in the five areas of assessment

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Choosing a digital camera

Not sure what camera to buy? **Nigel Atherton** explains the choices on offer in today's packed marketplace

Once upon a time shopping for a digicam meant seeking out the most megapixels for your money. Now, even most sub-£100 models have more than enough pixels to make a photo-quality print so, except for professionals and enthusiasts for whom ultimate image quality is the Holy Grail, buying decisions should be based upon other factors.

Pixel counts are still rising, but more slowly than before, and prices are still dropping. In the pocket snapshooter market, cameras are getting thinner, LCD screens are getting bigger and viewfinders are disappearing altogether to make way for them. Zoom ranges of 10x or more are a growing niche, and image stabilisers are starting to spread beyond this sector and into pocket cameras too.

But the biggest story is the phenomenal growth of the digital SLR. This year has seen a flood of new models for around the £600 mark. This has sparked a DSLR boom, as both 35mm SLR owners and compact users bitten by the bug trade up.

At the other end of the market, camera phones are snapping at the heels of the budget snapshooter, though they're still not at the stage when they can seriously challenge cameras aimed at the more discerning user. Yet.

Basic *Point and Shoot*

If you just want to take nice snaps and you're not going to enlarge them much bigger than standard print size (6x4in), any model with 5 megapixels will suffice. More megapixels will allow you to crop into the shot and still get a good-quality print.

DO *Stick with the recognisable brands, handle the camera first, and check the speed and responsiveness of the camera. This is one area where budget cameras often fall down.*

DON'T *Spend much less than £100, buy obscure brands, or buy mail order without seeing and holding the camera.*

LOOK OUT FOR *Nikon L3, Sony S600*

Lifestyle *Compact*

If you want to be the envy of your pals and look cool while taking pictures, then you need one of the slim, stylish models that we call 'lifestyle' cameras. Most are metal, fit in a shirt pocket and have at least 5 megapixels.

DO *Handle the camera. Many of these cameras lack a viewfinder and provide huge LCDs. Sometimes this leaves you nowhere to rest your thumb. Is it comfortable to hold?*

DON'T *Be swayed by style over usability. Don't buy a camera without a viewfinder if you don't like using the LCD, or can't see it in bright light. Check it before buying.*

LOOK OUT FOR *Sony T9, Canon IXUS 60, Fuji FinePix Z2*

All Weather *Compact*

If you're the outdoor type then you need a camera that can take whatever the weather throws at it. A weatherproof camera will also provide protection in snow, sand and other hostile conditions.

DO *Make sure the camera can stand up to what you plan to use it for. A weatherproof camera is okay for walking and light rain, but not white-water rafting. If this is your thing, buy a waterproof camera or invest in a housing or 'aquapak'.*

DON'T *Push your camera beyond its limits. Even most waterproof models can only generally be used to a couple of metres' depth – so, fine for snorkelling but not scuba diving.*

LOOK OUT FOR *Olympus Mju 600, Pentax Optio W20*

Super *Zoom*

If you're into wildlife, sport or are simply a voyeur you'll probably want a camera with a long lens. The Superzoom category offers plenty of choice.

DO *Handle the camera and try holding it steady at full zoom. How easy is it to use? Get a model with image stabilisation if you can afford it, as this will reduce the risk of camera shake. Consider models with a manual zoom ring on the lens itself.*

DON'T *Overestimate how much you'll use a big zoom. Don't buy a large model if you want something for travelling, or that will go in a coat pocket.*

LOOK OUT FOR *Panasonic FZ50, Kodak Z650*

Enthusiast *Compact*

Ideal as a second camera for SLR users, or for the discerning snapper. Enthusiast compacts contain virtually all the features found on an SLR, but in a smaller package.

DO *Check the easy accessibility of main functions. Is there a button on the body for them, or do you have to fiddle about in the menu? Make sure it offers RAW shooting, for superior image quality.*

DON'T *Waste your money if it's just for snaps. These cameras have a steep learning curve if you don't already understand the features.*

LOOK OUT FOR *Sony R1, Canon S3 IS, Kodak P850*

Digital SLR *Cameras*

The best choice for image quality and versatility, digital SLRs can be expanded and customised for any type of subject, with dozens of specialised lenses, flashguns and other accessories available. They're also faster and more responsive than other types of camera.

DO *Buy a DSLR if photography is a serious hobby for you, or is likely to become one. If you already have a 35mm system with a range of lenses, check out the same manufacturer's digital version so that you can still use your lenses.*

DON'T *Buy one if you just want to take holiday snaps.*

LOOK OUT FOR *Canon 400D, Nikon D80, Canon 30D, Sony Alpha 100*

BUYING *Tips*

DON'T GET HUNG UP ON MEGAPIXELS
More pixels don't necessarily mean better pictures. To squeeze more onto a sensor they have to make the pixels smaller (or the sensor larger, making the camera bigger). Smaller pixels collect less light, which can result in more prominent image noise, and problems such as fringing. High-megapixel cameras produce bigger files, too.

THINK ABOUT THE SENSOR
If image quality is your most important consideration, bear in mind that a larger sensor is at least as important as the number of pixels it contains, so pay attention to the sensor size. Digital SLR cameras have larger sensors than compacts. Also, make sure that the camera can save images in the RAW file format.

BE LENS WISE
A long zoom lens may sound good but consider how often you will need to zoom in on distant subjects. You may find that a decent wideangle will come in handy more often. If you do want a Superzoom bear in mind that it will be harder to hold steady at high magnifications. An image stabiliser will make it easier. Try the zoom. Is it smooth and precise, or slow and vague, or jerky and hard to control?

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY
First, decide what type of camera you want. Something small and pocketable or more substantial? Manual features or auto everything? Once you've decided on a type of camera, make a shortlist of models within your budget that fit the bill. Then visit your local dealer to try them. Do you like the way they look and feel? Do all the buttons make sense and fall easily to hand? Is the camera quick to respond when you focus, or press the shutter? Does it feel well built?

KNOW YOUR CAMERA
Some cameras are easier to use than others. Some provide help menus that explain what each feature does. Subject or 'scene' modes optimise the camera for various shooting situations, such as portraits and action. Some cameras provide docking stations or 'cradles'. These stay attached to your PC, and will download your pictures and recharge the batteries when you place the camera into them and press a button.

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PENTAX *IST DL

£350 Estimated Street Price

RRP £550

6 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 6.31MP, 6.1MP effective
- **LENS** Interchangeable
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30 - 1/4000sec + bulb
- **ISO** 200-3200
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, A, S, M + Auto and seven PICT modes
- **FLASH** Pop-up and TTL hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** TTL Optical /2.5in 210,000pixel TFT LCDS
- **OTHER** SD storage, RAW, JPEG
- **POWER** Four AA or two CRV-3
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 125 x 92.5 x 67mm/470g

back view

Simple welcoming top-plate with the minimum of fuss is not off-puttingly complex

front view

The £650 kit price tag includes the 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 lens

side view

The remote control, PC connection/ video out and DC-in sockets are hidden beneath a flap

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

NIKON D50

£350

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Simple to use, great results

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
RAW processing software limited

TESTED SEPTEMBER 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	18

89%

see more *on the web*

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Pentax *IST DL

The 6.1MP digital starter SLR from Pentax

The *ist DL is a small, nippy, silver-coloured DSLR that is easy to use, but has a wealth of features for the confident photographer.

The on/off switch is around the shutter release button at the top of the substantial handgrip and if you push this switch beyond 'on' it gives you a preview of the depth of field you will get in your final image via the optical through-the-lens viewfinder.

FEATURES The shutter is of the focal plane variety and has a useful range of 30-1/4000sec plus bulb. The bulb mode has its own position on the mode dial. The chip is a 23.5x15.7 6.31MP chip that delivers 6.1 million effective pixels at its maximum image size of 3008x2008 – enough for an impressive 15x10in print at 200ppi. Images can be saved as JPEGs or Pentax proprietary PEF RAW files. The menu button gives you access to four menus: Record, playback, set-up and custom. The menu makes it easy to find and change functions. There is an LCD top-plate display that shows the fundamentals of photographic information, and a smaller LCD under the image area in the viewfinder.

DESIGN While the exterior of the camera is a polymerous plastic, the heft of the camera tells you that there is a sturdy metal chassis beneath. There's no flex in the body and the lens mount is perfectly machined to fit onto the interchangeable lenses. On the handling side, button placement is sensible and the buttons have a positive click to them when pressed. The sculpting of the back and the handgrip make for a camera that is easy to hold and use too.

PERFORMANCE The *ist DL is speedy to switch on, focus and meter, and it can capture up to three frames per second at its highest quality JPEG setting in continuous mode. All in all, this is a very easy camera to use. In its simplest configuration – set to Auto pict mode – you can just switch the camera on and you're ready to shoot virtually instantly. You can review images at any point by pressing the international standard green arrow button, and return to capture mode by pressing the same button or by pressing the shutter release half-way down.

IMAGE QUALITY Noise is very well controlled. Some images benefit from a touch of sharpening – but only of the contrast increasing kind. On the demerit side, even with noise reduction, the ISO 3200 is a waste of space. White balance detection and selection were excellent and the camera dealt generally very well with very high contrast shots. Indoor shots were equally pleasing with the only failures being caused by camera shake. Image detail is excellent and macro shots were outstanding. More distant detail made the camera work harder. The focusing performance is absolutely brilliant. The Auto-Exposure lock allows you to take control when you think the camera will get it wrong. The camera does not let you simultaneously record JPEG and RAW. Further, the Pentax laboratory software is significantly less useful than other examples of this type of post-processing program.

VERDICT

This is a very good digital camera indeed. It takes good pictures with a minimum of fuss and is designed in such a way that pretty much anyone with a right hand could use it. The handling is positive, the results are impressive and the camera is well-made. **WDC**

MENUS
There are four menus that the user can access at the push of the menu button. Each gives you access to well-grouped functions for speed of access

2.5-INCH LCD
This monster-sized monitor has but one failing: that for left-eye-viewing reviewers the combination of sunscreen and sweat may cause it to become less than pristine

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NIKON D50

£350 Estimated Street Price

RRP £550

- **SENSOR** 6.24MP CCD/6.1MP effective
- **LENS** Interchangeable
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 30-1/4000sec, bulb
- **ISO** 200-1600
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, P, A, S, M, Sc
- **FLASH** GN 15m (ISO200), hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Opt/2in LCD
- **OTHER** SD, 3 Colour space, PictBridge, USB 2.0
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 133 x 102 x 76mm/540g

6 mega pixels

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

back view

The top-plate should be familiar to Nikon lovers, with little difference from that of the D70s, except a new scene mode

front view

The D50 accepts Nikon F mount lenses. There's a conspicuous lack of depth-of-field preview, though

side view

A rubber cover protects the ports, including the USB 2.0 connection

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

CANON 350D

£400

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Simple, image quality, design and build, price

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Lacks some features like depth of field preview, some minor colour issues

TESTED AUGUST 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	18

87%

see more *on the web*

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Nikon *D50*

A 6MP DSLR aimed at the enthusiast or family user

The Nikon D50 is a 6MP SLR which may initially appear to be a stripped-down D70, but actually still offers much more than basic operation. Chief among its highlights is the integration of Nikon's latest 3D colour matrix II metering system. The new version uses a 420-pixel RGB sensor to measure the scene, taking colour into account, while newly improved algorithms detect highlight and shadow details in the image and automatically compensate to prevent over or underexposure.

FEATURES Exposure options include manual and automatic metering modes and assistance also comes from a histogram and over- and underexposure warnings in playback mode. There is the full complement of exposure modes and the scene modes incorporate a new feature, Child mode, for taking pictures of children as they have different skin tones from adults.

The D50 is no slouch when it comes to colour. There's a choice of Adobe RGB, sRGB and an enhanced sRGB for portraits. The D50 has more options to change colour, tone, sharpness and so on, buried in the menus. Other important settings that can be changed is the ability to select the file type, with the JPEG option allowing both different compression rates and image size. Nikon has still included a RAW option using its proprietary NEF (Nikon Electronic File) format.

The camera's sensitivity covers ISO 200 to 1600; the larger sensor means that in higher gain settings, noise is kept under control. A Noise Reduction setting in the menu is also useful for longer exposures at slow shutter speeds. One major feature of the D50's menu is the Help files, which explain the various settings.

DESIGN Nikon has made a good job of the camera body, which is clad in polycarbonate, but big and heavy enough to feel substantial. The 2.0inch LCD is clear, but suffers in bright daylight. One thing lacking is a depth of field preview button. External controls are kept to a minimum in order to keep the camera uncluttered and simple; many of the controls have been shifted into the menu. The camera is without the old PC socket for external flashguns, but there is a hotshoe, which accepts Nikon-dedicated flash units, and the camera also has a small built-in flash.

PERFORMANCE The D50 has a drive mode that nearly matches that of its big brother, with a 2.5fps (frames per second) burst mode over a maximum of 137 frames before the buffer slows things down. The camera also uses a USB 2.0 connection, so download times are pretty nippy too.

IMAGE QUALITY The D50 shoots in both RAW and JPEG mode and the latter in particular are very good. Sharpness is good, aided by the 18-55mm DX kit lens used for the test. Colour can be a little off, with a bias in certain subjects towards yellow, especially in landscapes, and saturation may be a bit strong.

VALUE Very good value for the family market or enthusiasts who want a budget DSLR.

VERDICT

The ease of use will appeal to the family shooter. While the controls are stripped back, there are still plenty of menu options, and the camera's speed of operation will be bound to appeal. Overall, the camera puts in a good performance and will satisfy all but the most demanding users. **WDC**

LCD MONITOR
The LCD offers a 2in diagonal viewing size, with 130,000 pixels. While the screen size is welcome, it is difficult to see in harsh light

COMMAND DIAL
The thumb-controlled rear command dial is the main input for changing photographic settings, as well as allowing zooming on images via the LCD. There is no front command dial on the D50

IN ASSOCIATION WITH JESSOPS YOUR PICTURES. OUR PASSION

CANON EOS 350D

£400 Estimated Street Price

RRP £749

8 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 8.3MP, 8MP effective, CMOS
- **LENS** Canon EF/EF-S mount
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/4000sec + B
- **ISO** 100-1600
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, A,S, M, A-DEP, Auto, 5 Scene
- **FLASH** Hotshoe, GN 13m (ISO 100)
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Optical/ 1.8in LCD
- **OTHER** CF types I&II, 9 custom functions, USB2.0, RAW+JPEG
- **POWER** Rechargeable Li-ion
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 126.5 x 94.2 x 64mm/485g

back view

The 350D has a relatively small grip. The drive button from the 300D has been moved to the back

front view

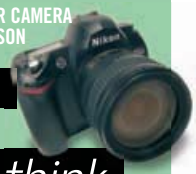
The built-in flash sits quite high to reduce redeye. The front is otherwise uncluttered by controls

side view

Connections include USB 2.0. The depth of field button is at the base of the lens mount

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY



NIKON D70

£500

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Features, fast, performance, image quality

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
LCD monitor, some button placements, images a bit soft at default settings

TESTED MAY 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	19

90%

see more *on the web*

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Canon *EOS 350D*

Canon's 300D replacement is a winner

The launch of the EOS 300D in 2003 was a landmark moment. It was the first digital SLR for under £1000 and consumer DSLR aimed entirely at the amateur enthusiast – and it sold in vast numbers.

FEATURES The 350D is not just an upgrade from the 300D, it's more like a complete redesign. The new body was, at 485g, the lightest DSLR when launched. The DIGIC II processor offers faster processing, better image quality and longer battery life. The 350D uses a single NB-2LH Lithium-Ion cell, and – thanks to the power-saving of the DIGIC II processor – Canon claims that the overall battery life is about the same as the 300D, despite its lower capacity.

DESIGN The control layout is broadly similar to the 300D. The drive button is now on the back, but the other changes are on the inside, and there are lots of them. Users can now directly select the metering and AF modes independently of the exposure mode chosen. Canon has also added nine custom functions, controlling such things as whether you want your exposure compensation in 1/3rd or 1/2 stop increments. With improved white balance fine tuning, a choice of two preset and three customisable parameter sets and the addition of flash exposure compensation, it seems that the words 'User Control' must have been writ large in the designers' workshop.

PERFORMANCE In use the 350D is very responsive. Start-up is almost instantaneous (0.2 seconds) though processing can take a while, especially when shooting RAW and JPEG together, but the buffer is large enough that it doesn't interfere with normal shooting.

The viewfinder is bright and clear, with a good data display. Exposure from the 35-zone evaluative metering was very consistent. The camera's interpretation of colour temperature was usually spot on, using auto white balance. The built-in flash provides coverage to 17mm and proved accurate, and flash exposure compensation control is available via the menu. The 1.8in TFT screen can be difficult to see in bright sunlight, and when you magnify images in review mode they never look very sharp, even when you know they are.

IMAGE QUALITY Exposures are generally spot on, even under difficult lighting conditions. Images contain a full tonal range and there's no problem with highlight detail. Skin tones and colour are very good too, displaying just the right amount of saturation and warmth to appeal to the average punter. Colours in general are fairly natural and if you want the most neutral colour, shooting RAW is the best way to go.

Images can be slightly soft, but a small tweak in Unsharp Mask is all that's needed to bring out the details and give the images some snap. The DIGIC processor and CMOS sensor again prove their worth with some of the best high-sensitivity images I've seen on a consumer DSLR. Even at ISO 800 and ISO 1600, images are quite acceptable.

VERDICT

Canon has risen to the challenge laid down by its rivals. The EOS 350D is a very good camera indeed: well designed, fast, accurate, brimming with features and producing great results. **WDC**

DUAL LCD
The top screen provides data about exposure settings, battery status and other settings, though not the ISO or exposure mode selected

TFT SCREEN
Perhaps the weakest link on the 350D: low resolution (115,000 pixels) and hard to see in bright sun

DRIVE BUTTON
This button was on the top-plate on the 300D. Its placement here is bad news for left-eye viewers, who can activate the self-timer with their nose by mistake

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SAMSUNG GX-1L

£450 Estimated Street Price

RRP £550

- **SENSOR:** 6.3MP CCD (23.5x15.7mm) 6.1MP eff
- **SHUTTER SPEED:** 30 - 1/4000sec + B
- **ISO:** 200-3200
- **EXP MODES:** M, A, S, P, 20 Scene
- **FLASH:** Built in/ Hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER:** Pentamirror
- **MONITOR:** 2.5in 210,000pixel LCD
- **OTHER:** SD, RAW, 2.8 fps
- **POWER:** 4xAA
- **SIZE/WEIGHT:** 125 x 92.5 x 67mm/470g

6 mega pixels

back view

The viewfinder clear and there's still plenty of room on the back for uncluttered button placement

top view

Looking like a film SLR, there's a very simple, non-digital feel to the controls on the top of the GX-1L

side view

Just like the *ist series, a side door pops open at the lifting of a locking switch to reveal the SD card slot

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

NIKON D70S

£500

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Excellent image quality for pixel count; ease of use; speed in action

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Slight fringing of fine neutral detail; depth of field preview method

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	18

TESTED MAY 2006

88%

see more *on the web*

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Samsung *GX-1L*

A brand new yet strangely familiar camera

The ongoing 'co-operation' between Samsung and Pentax continues with this 6.1MP model that startlingly resembles the Japan-only most-recently launched Pentax DSLR.

FEATURES On the chip front, the 6.3MP total CCD delivers a maximum resolution image of 3008x2000 pixels – enough for A3 prints with a thin-ish white border around them at a 200 pixels per inch printing resolution. The exposure system uses a 16-zone evaluative metering system that also offers a centre-weighted or a spot metering option. The metering system uses focus information for added accuracy and this comes from a five-zone AF system to deliver focusing down to less than 10in with the standard lens. On the exposure side, the usual M,A,S,P modes are joined by five scenes on the dial and an additional eight from the scene position on the dial, as well as an auto scene mode if this is all too complicated.

Add in all the usual exposure and flash exposure compensation modes, three metering modes and a trio of focusing modes and the GX-1L is pretty comprehensively specified. The optical viewfinder uses a reflex mirror to direct the taking lens's image into a dioptre-adjustable eyepiece and you can review images on the 2.5in LCD.

DESIGN The design of the camera is simple on the outside, complex on the inside. In other words you won't be too bamboozled if you steer clear of the menu and FN (function) buttons as all the controls that are physically selected by button or switch are self explanatory. The sculpted nature of the GX-1L, particularly for the all-important right-hand grip, means the camera feels safe and secure when held.

PERFORMANCE The camera is nippy in action and switches on and off relatively quickly. The focusing system had problems with none of the subjects I pointed it at, almost irrespective of light levels or contrast, which can't be bad.

IMAGE QUALITY The exposure system was sometimes fooled by scenes with strong backlighting but proved to be nothing that a very little tweak of Photoshop's levels command was not able to correct.

Noise was very well controlled and even though the minimum ISO is 200, the auto ISO setting is unlikely to upset you unless it reaches all the way to 1600.

I found the default image tone a touch warm for my liking, but you can alter that by selecting the alternative image tone.

VALUE It's amazing when you think that you get a fully featured DSLR for what used to be the price of a mid-range film SLR. This is a keenly priced DSLR and given its pedigree I consider it to be good value. It's rich in features and shouldn't break the bank.

VERDICT

It's easy to use automatically and the manual overrides and more-sophisticated manual features should be self-explanatory for any experienced photographer. The GX-1L delivers great images with a minimum of fuss and with panache. In short, it's a camera I can happily recommend, and one I'd be happy to buy. **WDC**

INFO BUTTON
The info button allows you to select the level of information you want to see on screen when reviewing pics. A press in record mode shows pretty much every setting of the camera on a single screen

FN BUTTON
The FN button allows speedy access to four settings (ISO, White balance, flash mode and drive mode) that are set with the four-way controller

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PENTAX K100D

£500 Estimated Street Price

RRP £550

6 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** APS-C CCD 23.5 x 15.7mm 6.3MP tot/6.1MP eff
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/4000sec+ B
- **ISO** 200-3200
- **EXP MODES** P, A, S, M, Auto, Sc, ±2EV
- **FLASH** Built in/ Hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Optical/ 2.5"
- **OTHER** SD, JPEG, RAW, PictBridge
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 129.5 x 92.5 x 70mm/560g

Top view

The left side mode dial offers MASP control as well as scene modes and the AutoPict mode

front view

Small but perfectly formed, the K100D accepts all K mount lenses, plus Pentax 645 and 67 lenses with an adaptor

side view

Doors protect the AV and USB ports, and the Manual and Auto Focus select switch is on this side

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

OLYMPUS E500

£500

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Small, stabilisation, AF, in-camera editing options, noise control, lens options

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Underexposes images, no simultaneous RAW+JPEG, overly menu reliant, price

TESTED NOVEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	16

83%

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Pentax *K100D*

Is Pentax on to a winner with its first K mount DSLR?

The latest SLR from Pentax shows a step towards the future, as well as a nod to the past. Gone is the *ist name, and now the new models will be prefixed with a K. Many Pentax users will recognise the nomenclature from the company's long-lasting analogue models, especially the legendary K1000.

FEATURES The most striking thing about the K100D is the camera's shake-reduction system. This is the first Pentax to feature it, and we'll see more in the future, such as on the newly announced K10D.

Pentax has improved its autofocus system, by using a new module, the SAFOX III, with 11 individually selectable points. There are plenty of metering and exposure options. For the novice there's an Auto Picture mode – similar to Auto mode on other cameras, and then some. It will also automatically select a scene mode by recognising the type of subject. More advanced modes are available for the more knowledgeable. There's also ±2EV exposure compensation, auto-exposure bracketing and a reasonably fast drive speed of 2.8fps in continuous drive mode. The bright 2.5in LCD has 210,000 pixels and up to 12x magnification for checking detail and sharpness. The LCD can also be viewed at up to 140° viewing angles horizontally and vertically. 19 custom functions allow personalisation. Images can be stored as JPEG or RAW but not, alas, as both.

DESIGN Previous *ist owners will instantly feel comfortable with the camera, as it follows the form and design of other recent Pentax DSLRs very closely. The body is small but feels robust and there's plenty of purchase around the grip. Common functions can be found in a quick-access menu, via the function button and four-way controller. From here you can change white balance, ISO, drive modes and flash functions. Several other functions need to be changed in the menu, which I found time-consuming. The buttons are easily reached in use.

PERFORMANCE The AF is much improved over the *ist series. It's more responsive and locks onto the subject quickly. I prefer to set the AF points manually, but the wide AF and the auto selection modes are equally efficient. Similarly, the shake reduction works quite well. The K100D starts quickly, being ready to shoot in a second or so. In high speed mode though, the camera only manages a few seconds at full burst before slowing down to 1fps, which is disappointing.

IMAGE QUALITY Overall the K100D tends to underexpose. I'd expect this to a degree with any camera, but the camera does fail consistently. Once the images are corrected in levels, though, they displaying good sharpness and contrast, and plenty of detail. Noise is well controlled, even at ISO 3200. White balance and saturation are pretty nifty too.

VALUE At launch, the price is a little high, but street prices are more competitive.

VERDICT

There's a lot to recommend the Pentax – image quality is potentially excellent, but there is an issue with the metering system. The camera doesn't offer that much more over previous models, other than the stabilisation. For upgraders the forthcoming Pentax K10D is bound to be more attractive. **WDC**

MENU
I can't say I'm a fan of the K100D's LCD menu – it has an ugly font and uses confusing terms to describe simple functions, seemingly written in phone text language

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NIKON D70S

£500 Estimated Street Price

RRP £700

6 mega pixels

- **CMOS SENSOR** 6.24MP, 6.1MP effective
- **LENS** Nikon F mount, 1.5x magnification
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/8000sec
- **ISO** 200-1600
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, A, S, M, Auto, and 6 Scene
- **FLASH** Pop-up and TTL hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** TTL optical and 2in 130,000 pixel LCD
- **OTHER** Custom functions, depth of field preview, 3 colour space, CF, PictBridge
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 140 x 111 x 78mm/600g

back view

Nikon hasn't messed with a winning formula: the layout remains unchanged since the D70

front view

The camera is available in kit form with an 18-70mm f/3.5-4.5G AF-S DX lens

side view

The big change here is the inclusion of a remote control socket

up against

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

CANON EOS 350D

£400

what we think

WHAT WE LIKE:
Speed, handling, overall image quality, remote control

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Occasionally weak yellow and blue reproduction, no PC socket

TESTED AUGUST 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	19
VALUE Based on RRP	17

90%

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WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

Nikon *D70s*

After the 6MP D70, Nikon aficionados get an upgrade

Among the press we'd been expecting an update of the D70. It had stiff competition from Canon, Konica Minolta, Pentax and Olympus, all of whom launched either better-specified or cheaper cameras. So what's the big deal with the D70s?

FEATURES First it has a remote control socket for an optional electronic cable release (MC-DC1). This was added after user demand for such a device. There is also the option of wireless shooting with theoptional ML-L3 remote release. The camera can also be controlled via a PC using Nikon Capture 4 software, that costs extra, and the camera's USB cable.

Second, there's a new LCD monitor which has been expanded to two inches with the same resolution as the original, 130,000 pixels. A final hardware addition to the D70s is a new Lithium Ion battery, EN-EL3a, offering up to 2,500 shots per charge, according to Nikon. Other advances in the electronics include improved Auto Focus and Dynamic AF and improved PictBridge page set-up support. The D70s uses a DX format 6.1MP CCD, delivering 3008x 2000 images.

In exposure terms, the camera has Nikon 3D colour matrix metering using a 1005-pixel sensor to measure the scene and compare the result with a database of 30,000 pictures. A series of exposure algorithms then provides the optimum exposure for the scene, and also takes into account the colours within the scene for more accurate exposure. Other exposure options include centreweighted and Spot metering. Exposure modes are supported by a metering range of EV 0-20, with exposure compensation over an impressive ±5EV, in a choice of 1/3 or 1/2 stop increments. This is further supplemented with auto exposure bracketing over two or three frames covering up to ±2EV.

Once exposure has been determined, the White Balance is the next critical feature of a DSLR. In the case of the D70s there is a choice of auto white balance, complemented by six presets with fine tuning and manual white balance.

DESIGN In handling terms, the camera fits into even a large hand comfortably, while being small, light and comfortable. There are enough buttons to access the main controls easily without being overcomplicated or button-heavy, while the flow of the menu is logical and clear.

PERFORMANCE In use the camera has many unique points; at the top of the list is the fantastic 3fps continuous drive over 144 fps in Normal JPEG mode.

IMAGE QUALITY The D70s shows good noise control through the entire dynamic range. Image sharpness is very good, even unprocessed RAW files have plenty of detail, which can be further improved on the computer, using Unsharp Mask, while the PictBridge setting turns out very good results straight to paper without a PC. The overall conclusion is slightly mixed, but the D70s certainly has more strengths than weaknesses and is capable of covering a wide range of subjects without sacrificing quality.

VERDICT

The improvements are effective for new buyers, as opposed to upgraders – the D70s won't disappoint. The speed, features and image quality is first rate. **WDC**

MONITOR
The major physical change to the camera is the upgrading of the monitor from 1.8 to 2inches. This still isn't the biggest screen around but it's certainly keeping up with the market

MENU
The D70s menu has been tweaked to include a help screen and provide a slightly clearer interface. The help screen in particular though, could still be more comprehensive

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OLYMPUS E-500

£500 Estimated Street Price

RRP £600

- **SENSOR** 8.89MP total/8MP effective
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 60-1/4000sec
- **ISO** 100-400 boost up to 1600
- **EXP MODES** P, A, S, M, 15 Scene
- **FLASH** Pop up GN 13, hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Opt/2.5" LCD
- **OTHER** CF I/II, xD, USB 2.0, sRGB and Adobe RGB
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 129.5 x 94.5 x 66mm/435g

8 mega pixels

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

back view

Olympus has returned to the traditional pentaprism to produce a conventional looking camera. The lens mount is the open standard 4/3rds mount

front view

The grip is comfortable, with plenty of room to curl the fingers around. There's a hotshoe for external flash

side view

The camera has a built-in pop-up flash. Image transfer is via USB 2.0

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

CANON 350D

£400

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Feature packed, price, image quality

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Some fiddly button placement, no dedicated depth of field button

TESTED SPECIAL 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	19
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	18

89%

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Olympus *E-500*

The E-500 boasts a whole host of impressive features

Olympus has always ploughed its own furrow, both in camera design and technology. The digital age has given the company a new edge – Olympus was an early and successful adopter of the new technology. A couple of years ago the emerging SLR market offered Olympus the chance to take its lateral thinking into a new direction, with the Four-Thirds system.

FEATURES The E-500 offers a surprising amount of features for what is essentially an entry-level camera. Aside from a full set of the usual exposure modes, both automatic and manual, there is also quite a comprehensive set of scene modes.

The metering options are very impressive. Considering the price, the E-500 is remarkably equipped with a new 49-point digital ESP system – a multi-zone system that can also be linked to the autofocus points for accurate metering on a central subject. One of the features that has proved popular on the E system is the anti-dust feature. Olympus's solution is to blast the sensor's filter with supersonic waves. The dust is essentially shaken off the sensor and is caught on a sticky catch pad. Another nice touch that we don't usually expect on a camera at this level is the ability to record RAW and JPEG images simultaneously.

DESIGN Here is a traditional-looking camera with many of the features that attracts Olympus users in the first place. First, the camera is small, which has always been one of Olympus's attractions. However, unlike other small SLRs from the likes of Pentax and even Canon, the smaller sensor of the E system means the lenses can be much smaller too.

PERFORMANCE The AF is a pretty nifty operator, with three AF points that can be automatically, or individually selected. There's an option of single and continuous AF, or manual focus. A nice touch is an option to combine the auto and manual focus, which is ideal for fine tuning focus. Most of the camera features are buried in the menu, and this is definitely worth exploring while you use the camera.

IMAGE QUALITY The E-500 is capable of very nice images, especially at the lower end of the ISO range. Colour is generally very good, though keep an eye on the white balance in some images. Overall I was very pleased, and there are few problems that can't be fixed by changing a setting somewhere in the camera. I was lucky enough to have great autumn weather, which can be harsh, leading to some blown-out highlights. But the camera handled them better than I expected and a small tweak to the contrast level, or switching to high-key mode, really helped.

VALUE With improvements a-plenty and some nifty features, this entry-level SLR has much to offer. However, the price is not too far removed from the newer Olympus E-400.

VERDICT

The Olympus E-500 is a vast improvement on the E-300 in design and image quality. The sheer amount of technology means the camera has something for everyone, and it packs a surprising punch. **WDC**

VIEWFINDER
The optical viewfinder is reasonably bright but quite small and, like the sensor, has a 4:3 ratio

FOUR-WAY CONTROLLER
The directional arrows can be used to rapidly change certain functions. They are also used to navigate the menu and scroll through images in review mode

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2" LCD Screen
3D Colour Matrix Metering

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CANON EOS 400D

£500 Estimated Street Price

RRP £650

10 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** CMOS APS-C 10.5MP/10.1MP effective (22.2 x 14.8mm)
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/4000sec+B
- **ISO** 100-1600
- **EXP MODES** P, AP, SP, M, Sc, ±2EV
- **FLASH** Built in/ Hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Reflex/ 2.5"
- **OTHER** CF I& II, JPEG, RAW, 3fps,PictBridge
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 126.5 x 94.2 x 65mm/545g

front view

The camera is also available in kit form with the 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 II, which was used for the entirety of this test

top view

The new 2.5in LCD has replaced the dual LCD of the 350D, with shooting information displayed on the LCD as you shoot

side view

A rubber door covers the USB port, Video out and Remote control ports. Two buttons on the lens collar opens the pop-up flash and operate depth of field preview

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

NIKON D80

£600

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Compact, build quality, dust reduction, improved AF, good RAW file quality

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Chroma noise especially in JPEGs, position of DoF preview button

TESTED DECEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	18

89%

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WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

Canon *EOS 400D*

Canon's highly popular 350D has been replaced with this stonking 10MP model

The EOS 400D is much more than just a more-populated sensor, with a host of new features to make this diminutive camera stand out from the crowd.

FEATURES Canon has addressed one of the big concerns of DSLR users, that of dust on the sensor. First the low-pass filter vibrates to shake off any debris, using a piezo element. Second, the sensor has an anti-static coating to repel dust in the first place. Finally there's a sensor mapping feature that takes a picture of, say, a white wall so the camera can see where the dust is on the sensor, and the Canon software can remove the offending articles in subsequent shots. Simply put, it's like an automatic Clone tool.

Canon has also added a new single 2.5in LCD, which also shows camera and exposure information. There's a new AF system with nine individually selectable AF points across the frame, to make focusing faster and more accurate, and the camera is enhanced by faster processing and an improved buffer. Canon has also added its Picture Style feature to the 400D.

DESIGN The improved LCD is a pleasure to use, and Canon has added a White Balance adjustment indicator in the viewfinder, which I found useful. I particularly like the fast access button to the Picture Style menu. I like the clean interface the camera uses on the LCD to display the exposure settings.

PERFORMANCE When you power up or shut down the camera the sensor-cleaning system momentarily kicks in. The most noticeable feature from there is the speed of the AF, which is improved over the previous model. Despite the claims of 27 JPEGs I managed 50secs continuous shooting before a short slowdown. Overall I shot 158 images in a minute using a SanDisk Extreme III card, which isn't bad at all.

VALUE The build, design and features all add up to a well-rounded package that's worth every penny.

IMAGE QUALITY Overall, images have a smooth tonality, with well-controlled highlights and an almost silky look which is attractive. Canon tends to produce lower-contrast images than other manufacturers, but the 400D seems to up the contrast just a little, producing (in my view) a better image than that of the 350D.

VERDICT

Canon has added some useful features and made a camera different enough to warrant an upgrade, without changing the basic functionality of previous models. Different but familiar is always a winning formula, and I doubt Canon will be knocked off the top spot by the young pretenders just yet. **WDC**

FLASH
Like all SLRs in this mid-range market, the 400D has a pop-up flash and hotshoe for dedicated flash units. There's no PC socket for external flash though, so an adaptor has to be used for studio lights or hammerhead flashguns

EXPOSURE MODES
The top-placed mode dial features all the usual exposure modes, as well as a selection of scene modes

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SONY ALPHA 100

£550 Estimated Street Price

RRP £599

- **SENSOR** APS-C 10.8MP/10.2MP eff
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30 to 1/4000 sec
- **ISO** 100-1600
- **EXP MODES** P, AP, SP, M, Sc, ±2EV
- **FLASH** Built in/ Hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Reflex/ 2.5"
- **OTHER** CF I& II, JPEG, RAW, 3fps, Anti Dust, Dynamic Range Optimiser, Super Steady Shot CCD
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 133.1 x 94.7 x 71.3mm/ 545g

10 mega pixels

front view

As Dennis Nordern used to say, 'Looks familiar?' The body is based around that from the now-defunct Dynax 5D

top view

The top dials follow the design of the Sony R1 and F828. The left dial offers access to digital functions as well as things like white balance

side view

There's a rubber cover over the camera ports and AF/MF focus selector on the left side

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

CANON 30D

£400

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Image stabilisation, promising range of lenses, images, LCD, image noise control

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Shutter noise, slight oversaturation, no histogram, average build quality

TESTED AUGUST 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	19
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

87%

see more *on the web*

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Sony *Alpha 100*

Sony competes with Nikon and Canon with its first DSLR

Sony is a big player, with massive resources and a trusted brand name. It now also has Konica Minolta's expertise and Carl Zeiss branded optics too.

FEATURES First off is that 10MP chip. It also offers Sony's Super SteadyShot, which we previously knew as Konica Minolta's AntiShake CCD. This image-stabilisation system moves the CCD instead of the optics to counteract camera shake. Another major feature of the camera is an expanded Dynamic Range (DR) feature, which maintains detail in shadows and highlights that would normally be lost in high-contrast conditions.

Like the Dynax 5D, Sony has kept the eye-start function and a new addition is that the AF also kicks in at this point so the subject is in focus before your finger even touches the shutter-release button. Every time the camera is turned on, the CCD shakes to dislodge any dust. Inside the camera is a new processor called Bionz, which Sony claims offers reduced noise, accurate colour, contrast and saturation to produce 'vivid yet natural' images. But they all say that.

The mount is the old Minolta AF mount, now known as the Alpha mount. The good news is that the two are mutually compatible, so Konica Minolta users still have access to new objectives as and when they appear. Even better news for the Konica Minolta fan is that the new Carl Zeiss T* lenses will also be compatible.

DESIGN The camera draws heavily from the Konica Minolta Dynax 5D, particularly on the back with an almost identical layout. The button layout is clean and simple. The LCD has an anti-reflection coating to aid viewing in bright light, and is made up of 230,000 pixels for sharp and bright image viewing.

PERFORMANCE The Sony doesn't have the quietest shutter, with a definite 'ker-ching' quality to it. The continuous drive is a strong point. I managed a burst for a minute at 3fps.The AF is quick and responsive; only the usual flat, low-contrast subjects gave the AF any problems.

IMAGE QUALITY JPEGS from the camera are bright and punchy, with warm tones. I was pleased by the low level of noise. From ISO 100 to ISO 400 there's little, though it begins to creep into the shadows as the gain is raised, with a marked increase from ISO 800.

VALUE This is the only current camera to feature built-in image stabilisation, which is more cost-effective than buying stabilised lenses. Unfortunately the build quality fails to match that of some similar models.

VERDICT

Sony has played it a little too safe by essentially re-launching the Dynax 5D with a new chip and some extra features. Maybe when it has time to stamp its own design ethos onto SLRs we'll see something more impressive. A good start with more than reasonable results, though. **WDC**

SECONDARY DIAL
This new design feature offers easy access to commonly used controls such as WB, ISO, metering and focus patterns, flash and the new Dynamic Range expansion controls

MODE DIAL
This is a fairly standard set of controls. MASP, auto and 6 scene modes are easily accessed

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NIKON D80

£600 Estimated Street Price

RRP £699

- **SENSOR** APS-C 10.8MP/10.2MP eff
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30 to 1/4000 sec
- **ISO** 100-1600 + Boost
- **EXP MODES** Auto, P, AP, SP, M, Sc, ±5EV
- **FLASH** Built in/ Hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Reflex/ 2.5"
- **OTHER** CF I& II, JPEG, RAW, 3fps, Custom functions
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 132 x 103 x 77mm/585g

10 mega pixels

front view

Nikon has kept the styling of the previous D50 and D70 models, though the curves have been softened a little

top view

More fingertip control has been added, with Drive and AF mode selection buttons added to the top plate. The left-side mode dial contains MASP as well as a selection of scene modes

side view

A pair of rubber port covers protect the USB 2.0, DC-in, AV and remote controller sockets. The left side also has buttons to set Auto/MF and other options

up against

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

SONY ALPHA 100

£550

what we think

WHAT WE LIKE:
Handling, controls, image quality, range of in-camera image processing

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Really need a fast PC to quickly open large files, especially RAW

TESTED OCTOBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	19
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	18

91%

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Nikon *D80*

Nikon provides 10 million reasons to upgrade

The D80 is Nikon's eleventh digital SLR, making the company one of the most prolific in this field. This model is set to fill the gap between the easy handling of the D70s and D50 models and the high resolution of the D200.

FEATURES The D80 uses a new 10.2MP sensor, and a faster processor with lower power usage. Nikon has included its latest metering system: 3D Colour Matrix Metering II. The D80 has a spanking new 11-area AF, dotted around the central area of the viewfinder. Nikon has also added some in-camera editing features, including some digital filter effects, such as a warm-up filter and skylight filter, as well as a colour balance adjustment. D-Lighting is included, which balances backlit or contrasty images, and redeye reduction, for example.

Nikon has finally seen fit to allow us to shoot at a lowest ISO of 100, instead of ISO 200. Low-light subjects are taken care of by the top speed of ISO 1600, plus an extended boost bringing it to an effective ISO 3200.

DESIGN It looks similar to the D70s, but there are differences. The D80 has softer, curvier edges. It's slightly smaller, yet has a bigger viewfinder, a larger LCD of 2.5 inches, and more buttons. Part of this is achieved by switching to SD cards. In terms of handling, the D80 is similar to the D70. It feels comfortable and the controls are easily to hand. By far the most pleasant development for users of previous DSLRs is the viewfinder and LCD.

PERFORMANCE The new AF is fast and accurate, – moving subjects were easily tracked; the AF picked out the right subject most of the time if I was shooting off-centre and did it quickly. The camera is responsive too: the shutter release time is minimal. As for continuous burst, I shot 173 frames of large JPEGs at 3fps in a minute.

IMAGE QUALITY Pictures have a very nice tonality, JPEGs are practically ready to print. Images tend slightly to the warm side in the Normal setting. There's so much control within the camera, that minor niggles can be easily fixed.

VALUE While not the cheapest model on the market, the results and handling from this camera speak for themselves.

VERDICT

Nikon has produced another winner, reinforcing the strength of its SLR line-up, and this is a worthy successor to the incredibly popular D70. If you are keen to progress your photography with a DSLR, or even want to produce better-quality images than you could with your previous Nikon, the D80 offers a cheaper alternative to the D200. **WDC**

MODE DIAL
This has remained pretty unchanged throughout the consumer DSLR Nikon range, with a combination of M,A,S,P and scene modes

DRIVE AND AF
This pair of new top-plate buttons allow you to change the drive modes and the AF modes

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Cameron Knight leans against his customised pick-up wearing his personalised T-shirt with the transfer printed using a Canon PIXMA MP510 Photo All-in-One printer, copier and scanner. Go to **www.canon.co.uk/pixma** for more inspiring print ideas.

My ride,
my way.

CANON 20D

£600 Estimated Street Price

RRP £1270

8 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 8.2 MP Eff/ 8.5 Total
- **LENS** Canon EOS EF, EF-S
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30 – 1/8,000
- **ISO** 100-3200
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, P,A,S,M, Scenes
- **FLASH** GN 12 @ISO 100
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** OpticalTTL/ 1.8"
- **OTHER** CF I/II
- **POWER** Li-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 144 x 106 x 72 mm / 770g

back view

If you've used an EOS 3 or other mid range Canon film SLR the top plate will be familiar. The mode dial is on the left of the camera

front view

The lens release button and depth of field preview button are to the right of the lens when viewed from the front

side view

Rubber protectors cover the camera's ports which includes USB 2.0 Hi-speed

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

NIKON D70s

£500

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Good image quality, good specification, versatile

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Depth of field button in wrong place, clunky software

TESTED DECEMBER 2004

FEATURES Specifications, controls	19
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	19
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	18

91%

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WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

Canon *EOS 20D*

An impressive 8MP replacement for the successful 10D

The 20D replaced Canon's big-selling, rightly popular EOS 10D, and running even a cursory eye over its specs reveals that this looks to be a very tasty number indeed.

SPECIFICATIONS The 20D has an APS-C sized sensor, with a traditional 35mm ratio of 2:3 instead of 4:3. The sensor is also a CMOS type, as we've come to expect from Canon and as found in all of its SLRs up to the top-end 16MP EOS 1DS MkII.

The EOS 20D shares with 1DS Mk II the DIGIC II processor, Canon's own image processor, which contributes to the camera's burst speed of 5fps over 23 frames. The DIGIC processor promises colour and start-up speed advantages too, which is a claim most other manufacturers make about their own processor systems. What is also impressive on the 10D is the sensitivity range of the camera, covering ISO 100-1600 in normal mode, with an expanded option to push this up to 3200.

DESIGN With a magnesium alloy body, this is a significantly sturdier camera than the plastic-bodied EOS 300D, and is much better suited to enthusiast and semi-pro use. The camera feels tough and capable. It follows Canon's design ethos: the camera's more about functionality and ergonomics, with aesthetics coming third, though Canon's designers may disagree.

PERFORMANCE Anyone who has ever used a Canon film camera will feel pretty much at home with the photographic controls of Canon DSLRs. The left side control dial features the same type of dual layout found on EOS film SLRs, with a set of manual and AE options on half the dial and scene modes on the other half. This set-up is designed to allow new SLR users to learn photography and progress from the basic to the advanced. It's also good for the lazy or hurried photographer, who may not have the time or the inclination to think about how to shoot a particular subject. Some niggles do include the awkward location of the depth of field preview and a lack of an on-body EV compensation control.

IMAGE QUALITY Images from the 20D are extremely good. Exposure is pretty much spot on every time using the evaluative metering, and it is only particular contrasty, low-key or high-key subjects that may need some help to get the best exposure. Colour is really good, with plenty of options to gain the correct white balance and a choice of colour spaces. At normal sharpness too, the camera can produce good results in camera, though you may prefer to bump up the sharpness a little if you intend to use PictBridge or print without PC post processing.

VALUE The price is as astonishing as the camera, but more recently released contenders present some stiff competition that will be worth weighing up.

VERDICT The 10D was a great camera and the 20D is even greater. £600 for a camera of this resolution, build and versatility is just amazing. Okay it's still an expensive purchase for most of us, but consider the next level of Canon cameras and see how well this model performs and the features it has and you can see how far Canon has come into building a serious contender for a great price. **WDC**

MONITOR
At 1.8" the LCD is not the largest available, but it's bright and clear and is adequate for previews

FOCUS POINT SELECTOR
With nine selectable individual focus points, the camera needs a joystick controller and this is it

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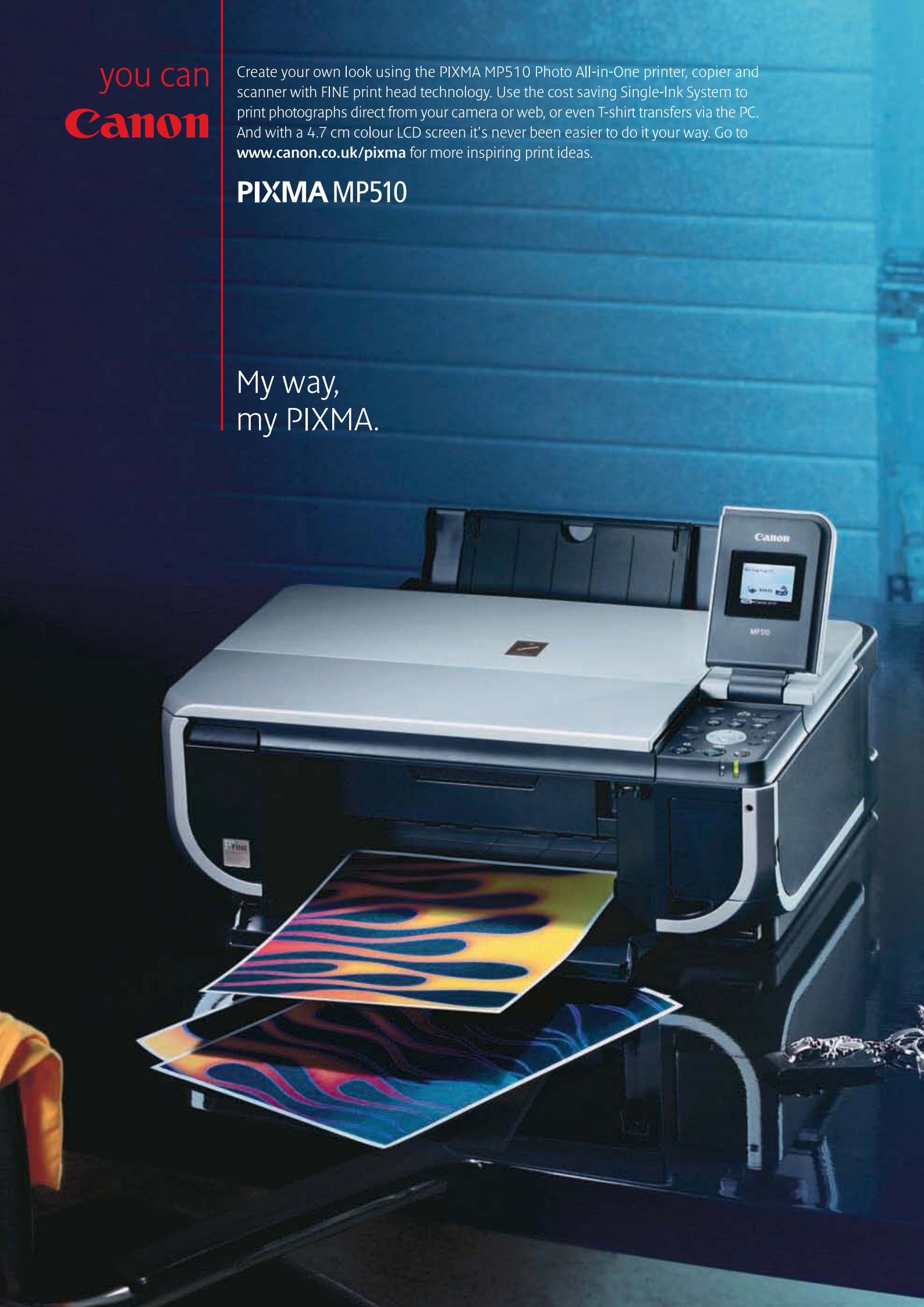

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SAMSUNG GX-1S

£650 Estimated Street Price

RRP £750

- **SENSOR** 6.3MP, 23.5 x 15.7mm CCD
- **LENS** Pentax KAF bayonet mount
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/4000 sec, bulb
- **ISO** 200-3200
- **EXP MODES** AP, SP, P, M, 6 scene modes
- **FLASH** Hotshoe, integral
- **VIEWFINDER** Pentaprism, 96% view
- **MONITOR** 2.5-inch
- **OTHER** SD, RAW, JPEG
- **POWER** AA lithium, Alkaline, Ni-MH
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 125 x 92.5 x 67mm/ 505g

6 mega pixels

back view

Though compact, this SLR still has a generous 2.5in LCD. The rest of the rear is uncluttered except for a clutch of essential controls

top view

The top plate is similarly clean, housing a flash hotshoe, pop-up internal flash and a well-placed settings display panel

side view

Toggle between manual and automatic focus controls using the MF/AF switch mounted on the base of the camera's lens

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

NIKON D70S

£500

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Solid automatic and manual features, compact body

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Some exposure and focusing issues detract from the shooting experience

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

TESTED JUNE 2006

85%

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Samsung *GX-1S*

A trendsetter or merely treading in the footsteps of rivals?

A product of Samsung's ravenous hunger for its own slice of the digital SLR market, the GX-1S will belie more than a hint of familiarity to those already acquainted with the SLRs from Samsung's partner in crime, Pentax.

FEATURES Loaded with a respectable but not overly ambitious 6MP CCD, the GX-1S is aimed at the amateur market produces images of 3008x2000pixels. Optical functionality is provided by the Schneider Kreuznach D-Xenon lens system and Pentax's KAF bayonet mount, allowing compatibility with a huge number of Pentax lenses as well as Samsung's D-Xenon range.

Five main exposure modes include the full range of essential SLR attendees: Program, Shutter Priority, Aperture Priority, Manual and Bulb. Metering modes include evaluative, centreweighted and spot. Looking at these specifications, the GX-1S may not appear groundbreaking when compared to higher-end or other recently released mid-range members of the DSLR market, but the Samsung certainly offers a reassuringly healthy clutch of features with no unsettling omissions.

DESIGN Reassuringly sturdy, the GX-1S lacks the traditional bulk of rival SLRs. While other SLRs present a bewildering array of buttons, dials and knobs, the GX-1S has no cause to strike fear in the inexperienced user. Cleanly designed with simple, single-function buttons, the GX-1S impresses with its ability to hide complex technology beneath such a simple shell.

PERFORMANCE Quick to power up, the camera becomes fully functional in around a second while write times ensure a quick turnaround between shots. Challenging focal lengths can at times fox the autofocus system into stalling the shutter release. The exposure system can be relied upon to yield favourable results and these are, most important perhaps, very much like what is displayed through the viewfinder. When put through its paces in a range of diverse shooting conditions the Samsung holds up well, smoothly delivering consistently favourable results.

IMAGE QUALITY Files are reassuringly clean with no overpowering digital artefacts. Increasing the ISO does not unleash an avalanche of noise, and this degradation only becomes a noticeable problem at the camera's very highest sensitivities.

VALUE Offers a good level of value without standing out enough to overshadow other, more-established, rivals. and can be relied upon to not only stand the test of time but also provide a tried and tested performance that will suit seasoned SLR users.

VERDICT

The GX-1S offers nothing that hasn't been seen before. The GX-1S will appeal to consumers who rate brand recognition when making buying decisions, and reward them with comprehensive and effective functionality in return. **WDC**

MODE DIAL
The hub of the GX-1S, the mode dial allows one-click access to all of the camera's manual and automatic exposure modes. One turn will also switch off flash or give the camera autonomy over scene selection

ON/OFF SWITCH
In addition to controlling the camera's state, the rotating switch that surrounds the shutter also incorporates a sprung aperture preview position that shows users the depth of field in an image at the selected aperture

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£700 Estimated Street Price

RRP £1600

- **SENSOR** 6.17million S/ 6.17million R pixels 12MP output
- **LENS MOUNT** Nikon F
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/4000sec &B
- **ISO** 100-1600
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, A, S, M
- **FLASH** PC socket, Hotshoe, Built-in
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** OPT TTL / 2in TFT
- **OTHER** CF, xD, 2.5fps, RAW, JPEG, USB2.0, IEEE 1394
- **POWER** 4x AA type Ni-MH batteries
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 47.8 x 135.3 x 78.5mm/815g

6 x2 mega pixels

back view

The mode dial is on the left and the shutter release on the right, as well as a grey LCD data panel

front view

As well as a built- in flash there's a PC socket for studio flash and an AF illuminator for low light

side view

Ports for USB 2.0, Firewire and video out, AC-in and an electronic remote

up against

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

CANON EOS 20D

£600

what we think

WHAT WE LIKE:
Image quality, sensor, ease of use

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Spec for the price, software clunky, slow drive, small buffer

TESTED MARCH 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

85%

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Fujifilm Finepix S3 Pro

The SR sensor extends the dynamic range of the S3 Pro

Fujifilm's third incarnation of its S-series DSLR, long a favourite of both enthusiasts and much of the pro market, is the S3 Pro.

FEATURES It uses Fujifilm's Super CCD, promising an output size to 12MP, and uses the SR version of the sensor. The Super CCD SR has 12 million effective pixels, when the S and R pixels are combined; each of these is paired to produce a single output pixel, resulting in higher dynamic range. Files can also be interpolated to 12MP output. Its APS-C sized sensor is the largest in the range. The S3 has a built-in flash unit and a hotshoe, which accepts Nikon-dedicated flash units, as well as a PC socket for attaching X-sync external guns. Main exposure modes are manual, program, shutter priority and aperture priority, changed by a control dial on the left. The right side has the shutter release button, encircled by the power switch. Usefully, the shutter release has a standard threaded cable release, with a port on the left side of the camera for an electronic remote. There is a pair of EV compensation buttons, for exposure and flash compensation.

PERFORMANCE The main LCD is a 2in version with 235,000 pixels. Its menu is divided into five short sub-menus, and allows camera set up as well as offering a choice of colour spaces, either Adobe RGB or sRGB, custom White Balance, and either standard or wide dynamic range can also be set.

Live preview enables viewing of the subject on the LCD instead of through the viewfinder, just like on compacts. There's both an xD and a CF card slot and images can be recorded to either, by selecting an option in the menu. The camera doesn't allow copying from one card to another, but that's a minor issue. Power-wise the camera is compatible with AA NiMH cells, and the S3 Pro comes equipped with Hyperutility 2 software, which offers a raft of features including image browsing and RAW conversion

IMAGE QUALITY Images have a nice tonality, with a good range of tones from shadow to highlight. Unprocessed, the pictures can appear a little flat and need a lift in contrast to get the best from them. Similarly the sharpness of images looks a little low at default settings but is improved by unsharp mask. In PictBridge mode and using the film settings (from JPEGs), sharpness is automatically enhanced and produces better results than expected. Noise is well handled – the new processor is said to reduce the signal-to-noise ratio at higher ISOs. It does, but the maximum sensitivity is limited to ISO 1600, when competitors are offering 3200. The dynamic range and the tonality of the prints is exceptional.

Within the RAW software are options to really improve the images. The most useful is a slider to control the dynamic range, moving from 0 to 400%. This seems to control the amount of blending between the S and R sensors, and does save highlight detail in most cases.

VALUE It's expensive but offers an impressively high resolution. However, the S3's specifications often fail to match those of cheaper rivals.

VERDICT

Although the sensor can produce outstanding images, the S3 Pro is a mixed bag. The S3 is good but it could have been great. **WDC**

DUAL LCD SCREENS
The top screen offers access to image size and quality, with parameters to set the dynamic range, output size, colour options and more. The lower screen displays a standard menu and shows image preview. It also displays the unique live image preview

CONTROL DIAL
Camera functions such as aperture and shutter are controlled by a pair of dials (another is at the front). These are also used to change other settings, in conjunction with the various function buttons

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*Weatherproof equivalent to the IEC standard publication 529 IPX4

OLYMPUS E-330

£720 Estimated Street Price

RRP £900

7 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 4/3 Live CMOS (17.3x13mm) 7.5MP Eff
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 60 to 1/4000 sec/B
- **ISO** 100-1600
- **EXP MODES** M,A,S,P, 20 Scene
- **FLASH** Built in/ Hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER** Reflex
- **MONITOR** 2.5in flip-out LCD
- **OTHER** CF I& II, xD JPEG, ORF, 3 fps, Live view LCD
- **POWER:** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 140 x 87 x 72mm/550g

back view

The camera is dominated by the 2.5in LCD. Button layout is good and the viewfinder clear

top view

The unusual design is evident thanks to the porro 'sideways' pentaprism. The built-in flash lies flush to the top plate and the hotshoe is over the viewfinder

side view

Notice the pop-up flash and flat top. There's a rubber cover on the side to protect the combined USB/Video Out port

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

CANON EOS 350D

£400

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Pull-out LCD, overall handling, dual media slots, Anti-dust

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Noisy images as gain is raised, fingerprints on screen, no PC socket

TESTED APRIL 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	19
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

86%

see more *on the web*

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WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

Olympus *E-330*

SLR with more than a couple of unique features

Olympus continues to push its FourThirds system, with the fourth camera in the line-up. The E-330 follows the innovative design of the E-300, which allows Olympus to play with the form of what a digital camera could be and introduce new and unique features.

FEATURES This new model, for example, has several features never seen before on digital SLRs, or traditional SLRs come to that. Not least is a live-view monitor; this is not quite a world first, as Fujifilm has one on the Finepix S3Pro, but the Olympus one is colour and is applied to an adjustable hinge for easy viewing. It also incorporates a new sensor not previously seen on a camera. The sensitivity range is ISO 100 to 400, which can be boosted to 1600 in 1/3-step stops in manual modes. In auto ISO, the range stays within the lower limit. Processing is via Olympus's True Pic Turbo II processor as on the E-300 and E-500 as well as several compacts.

DESIGN The design is an acquired taste, but it's growing on me. From the back, the camera is better. The 2.5in pull-out screen is definitely a winner. It can be angled downwards by 45°, ideal for shooting over a crowd, or angled upwards by 45° or 90°. This is a lovely feature offering all the advantages of a waist-level finder. Button placement is good, though the buttons are small compared to, say, the Nikon D70S.

PERFORMANCE The SupersonicWave Filter delays the start-up of the camera, but considering the good this feature does, this is no bad thing. Otherwise, the camera is nippy, with a reasonable AF system that locks onto subjects, allowing immediate shooting. Continuous AF has a few problems tracking some fast-moving subjects, but this isn't a camera designed for sport or fast shooting really. Especially when you consider the average burst rate and the fairly low buffer rate.

IMAGE QUALITY Images are very good, with better sharpness than those of 6MP models. JPEGs turn out good image quality at ISO 100 and 200, but by 400 noise begins to creep into shadow areas. It is even more obvious if you study the individual channels, but full-colour images don't show the noise as much. It's certainly better than the older E-300. RAW images look good, but benefit from sharpening and again need some noise reduction, especially in the higher ISO range.

VALUE For £900 including the kit lens, the Olympus E-330 is more expensive than many comparative models, though this price is bound to drop. However for some people the added bonus of the extra pixels and pull-out live view monitor will make the E-330 worth paying the extra for.

VERDICT

There's a lot to recommend this camera, especially that monitor. I found this to be the camera's Unique Selling Point and it's a long-overdue feature that is also extremely useful and fun. Features like this show that Olympus is thinking of the advantages of a digital system rather than replicating 35mm. On the whole, the camera is one I would happily take with me on holiday. **WDC**

LCD
The 2.5in LCD monitor is on a bracket and flips out of the camera body to allow low or high-level viewing

LIVE VIEW BUTTON
This button switches the live view modes on. Choose between continual AF mode or manual mode, which offers a 100% view direct from the sensor. You need to press the monitor button to view the live feed

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* Weatherproof equivalent to the IEC standard publication 529 IPX4
** In 3 million pixel mode

CANON EOS 30D

£850 Estimated Street Price

RRP £1200

- **SENSOR** APS-C CMOS (22.5x15mm) 8.2MP Effective
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30 to 1/8000 sec/B
- **ISO:** 100-1600 (expanded 3200)
- **EXP MODES** M,A,S,P, 6 Scene, Custom
- **FLASH** Built in/ Hotshoe/PC
- **VIEWFINDER** Pentaprism
- **MONITOR** 2.5in TFT 230,000 pixels
- **OTHER** CF I& II, JPEG, RAW, 5fps, Picture Style
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 144 x 105.5 x 73.5mm/700g

8 mega pixels

back view

A major addition is the large 2.5in LCD. Aperture and exposure compensation is controlled by the scroll wheel

top view

There's little difference on the top-plate between this and the 20D

side view

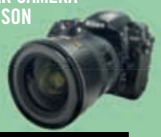
The plastic CF chamber door is secure. The other side has ports for PC, AC, Video and remote protected by a rubber port cover

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

NIKON D200

£1100



what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Build quality, LCD, menu system, low noise, high specifications

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Images a little flat, handling, depth of preview button placement

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

TESTED MAY 2006

87%

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Canon *EOS 30D*

The 30D follows on from the successful EOS 20D

Canon's 30D builds on the highly successful 20D, itself a follow on from the 10D, which replaced the D60. This progression of models has produced an increase in the amount of pixels on the sensor: both the D60 and the 10D had 6MP; and the 20D and the 30D have 8MP. So how does the EOS 30D improve on its predecessor?

FEATURES The 30D contains the same CMOS sensor as the 20D, with 8.2 million effective pixels, out of a total 8.5 million. It is also APS-C size, which offers a 1.6x shift in focal length on 35mm format lenses. The 30D continues to use the Canon EF mount, which means any Canon AF lens may be used, or similar from the independent lens makers.

This model has been updated to take advantage of some of Canon's newer features. There's a larger LCD screen, with 2.5 diagonal inches of viewable area, 230,000 pixels and a quoted viewing angle of 85° from most directions. Canon has also added its Picture Style software to the 30D. This provides a sub menu to allow in-camera digital optimisation for popular subjects such as portraits or Landscapes. It's like scene modes on steroids, and it works well. The other major upgrade incorporated into the EOS 30D is the frame rate, which has been increased from 5fps over 23 frames on the 20D, to 5fps over 30 frames: a significant improvement for sport or wildlife shooting.

DESIGN The 30D is well made and comfortable to hold, thanks to its robust and sturdy build, and also its rubber grip. The top plate has a large LCD screen with readouts for controls such as aperture, shutter, drive mode and exposure compensation. Many of these settings can be changed with the buttons placed close by, in combination with the front controller and rear command dial.

PERFORMANCE As for the AF, it is generally spot on, though it can at times dance between focus points or choose the wrong one, in which case you need to switch to manual selection. Canon also knows a thing or two about menu design: I like its scrolling action and fast jump to different sections, though I still find the typeface quite small compared to other systems.

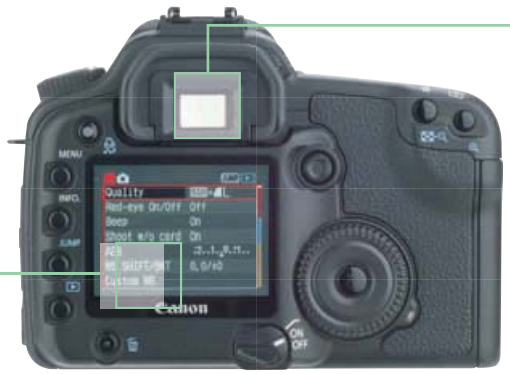
IMAGE QUALITY The 30D is capable of some extremely fine images, and generally exposure and colour are very good. The camera does suffer from Canon's standard flat-image look, though, and most images could do with a tweak in contrast to get rid of a slight milky look that faintly covers the images. In terms of noise, the 30D performs very well, even at high ISO settings. However, several images we shot were less sharp than we'd hoped because of the quality of the Canon lenses.

VALUE The 30D isn't cheap, and I wouldn't suggest upgrading from the 20D. But if you're moving up from, say, a 300D, you'd probably appreciate the extra features and build quality. Similarly, for keen Canon users switching to digital for the first time, the build and features make it a viable option.

VERDICT

As a new camera, the Canon EOS 30D is a bit of a disappointment, but viewed as an upgrade to an already very good camera, it performs well. **WDC**

LCD
The 2.5in LCD monitor is clear, though the type is rather small. The scrolling, Jump options make it easy to find your way around



VIEWFINDER
The 95% field of view is about average for this type of camera, and the information in the viewfinder is bright and clear. There's also dioptre control and a rubber viewfinder hood, so you don't scratch your viewfinder

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SIGMA

OUR WORLD

MICHAEL MELFORD SHOOTS THE WORLD WITH A SIGMA LENS
MICHAEL MELFORD: Born in the U.S. in 1950. Worked as a contributing photographer to LIFE magazine and other major publications. Internationally renowned for location photography. Won Best Editorial Photography award from the Caribbean Tourism Board in 2003. Photo data: SIGMA 17-70mm F2.8-4.5 DC MACRO lens, 1/15 second exposure at f2.8.

Still capturing images long after the sun sets in the Caribbean

The majesty of twilight on the island of Saba in the Caribbean is breathtaking. Only a large aperture lens can capture it in its full glory. The SIGMA 17-70mm zoom lens is just such a lens. Brightness is excellent, with maximum aperture of F2.8 for wide-angle shooting, with a minimum focusing distance of 20cm / 7.9 inches, it has an amazingly close focusing capability at all focal lengths. Designed specifically for digital SLR cameras, the lens image circle is designed to bring the best out of image sensors of APS-C size, used in digital SLRs. Optical design and lens coating is optimised precisely to reduce flare and ghosting. SLD (Special Low Dispersion) coated glass and aspheric lens elements maintain superior image quality throughout the entire range. The lens design incorporates an inner focus system making it particularly suitable for use with circular polarizing filters and petal-shaped lens hoods.

NEW

Available for SIGMA, Canon, Nikon-D, Konica/Minolta and Pentax digital SLR cameras.

FOR DIGITAL

Digital SLRs can capture great close-ups with this large-aperture standard zoom lens.

SIGMA 17-70mm F2.8-4.5 DC MACRO

*Vignetting (a darkening of the corners of the image) will occur if the lens is used with digital SLR cameras with image sensors larger than APS-C size or 35mm SLRs, and APS SLRs

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NIKON D200

£1100 Estimated Street Price

RRP £1299

- **SENSOR** DX Format 10.92MP total, 10.2MP eff CCD
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/8000 sec/B
- **ISO** 100-1600 + 1 stop boost
- **EXP MODES** P, AP, SP, M
- **FLASH** Built in/Hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Reflex/2.5in
- **OTHER** CF I& II, JPEG, TIFF, NEF, 5fps
- **POWER** Li-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 147 x 113 x 74mm/830g

10 mega pixels

back view

Dominated by the 2.5" screen, the back is straightforward, with clearly marked buttons and plenty of finger space

top view

Shooting information is visible on the LCD, while ISO, quality and white balance appear on the left grouping

side view

Rubber coverings protect the ports, with access to DC-in, USB 2.0 and video out sockets

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

CANON 20D

£600

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Design; overall camera speed; very nice handling; good RAW files

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Post-production JPEG processing is often needed; LCD is too faint in bright light

TESTED FEBRUARY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	19
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	18

90%

see more *on the web*

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Nikon *D200*

Is Nikon's latest offering for pros worth waiting for?

It's been over three years since Nikon released the D100, which proved reliable with pros and semi pros alike, but a new generation of cameras with better specification, better sensors and, importantly, better prices have come along.

FEATURES Nikon responded with the eagerly awaited D200. It boasts a 10.92MP CCD sensor that operates with 10.2 million effective pixels. Each of those is placed onto a Nikon DX-sized sensor to produce a 1.5x magnification ratio. The camera offers up to 5fps shooting in continuous mode, aided by the sensor's fast, four-channel data output, which streams the information from the sensor to the LSI processor and on to the high-speed memory buffer.

The D200 has a new autofocus module, the Multi-CAM 1000. This offers 11 individually selectable focus areas, dropping to a seven-sensor wide area AF with dynamic AF in continuous server mode, to aid in tracking moving subjects as they move across the viewfinder or towards the camera. There is also a Closest Subject Priority Dynamic AF function.

DESIGN The D200 has a magnesium alloy body, with a rubberised coating and grip. This is further enhanced with sealed seams to protect the camera from dust and moisture. Larger lenses will add to the weight, but it's not as heavy as the D2X.

PERFORMANCE Start-up speed is impressive – Nikon claims the D200 powers up in 0.15 sec, with a viewfinder blackout time of 105 milliseconds, and shutter lag of 50msecs. The camera offers between 30 and 1/8000sec shutter speeds, matching top-of-the-range models. Similarly, the camera has a wide ISO sensitivity, covering ISO 100-1600.

There's not much to dislike about this camera. The controls are well placed, with fast access to the necessaries on the left of the top-plate. The menu is easy to read, and you can customise it extensively to handle the way you want, making it very user-friendly.

IMAGE QUALITY The D200 is difficult to judge – the camera performs contrary to expectations with some strange-looking histograms. There's something odd here, especially as regards JPEG images. Whenever there is a certain amount of white in the image it seems to underexpose. However, images can be corrected and exceptional pictures are possible – you just need work to achieve them. You expect to do a certain amount of work with RAW images so this is not really a problem, and in this respect I think the D200 is designed for – and should be primarily used as – a RAW shooter.

VALUE A 10MP DSLR at this price is good value, especially if you consider the leap in price to the next camera class. If you're a dedicated Nikon user, maybe upgrading from the D70 to this, then you'll be happy with what you get for your money.

VERDICT

The D200's a lovely camera to use, but be prepared to put some time into image editing and processing as the camera is really geared for RAW rather than JPEG. Very capable and with bags of potential. **WDC**

LCD
The LCD monitor is a good size at 2.5", but suffers in bright light and needs to be reduced in brightness by -2 to accurately reflect the relevant exposure

NAVIGATOR
As well as operating the menu scrolling, this multi-pivotal button is used to select AF points

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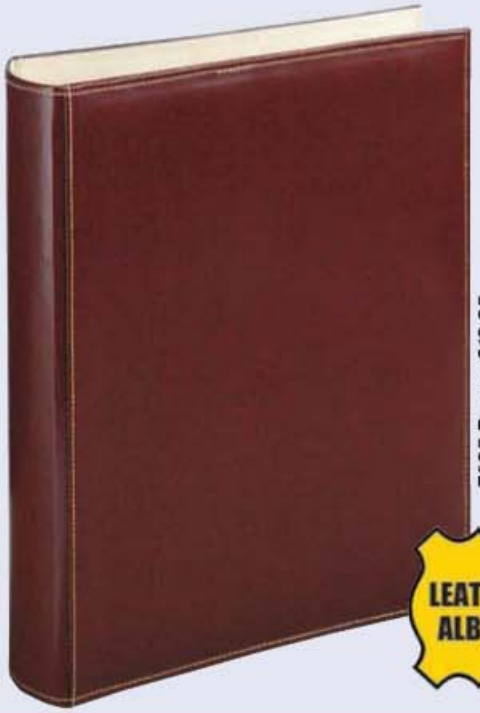

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PANASONIC L1

£1250 Estimated Street Price

RRP £1500

- **SENSOR** 4/3 Live MOS 7.9 Total/7.4MPeff
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 60 to 1/4000 sec
- **ISO** 100-1600
- **EXP MODES** P, A, S, M, Sc, ±2EV
- **FLASH** Built in/ Hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Reflex/ 2.5in LCD
- **OTHER** SD, JPEG, RAW, 3fps, Supersonic Wave, Mega OIS in lens
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 145.8 x 86.9 x 80mm/530g

7 mega pixels

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

front view

The boxy body looks similar to a rangefinder camera, and certainly captured a few admiring, intrigued glances

top view

The Leica lens is a hefty beast, but is a great optic. The top plate features a traditional-style shutter speed ring with the release button in the centre

side view

The L1 has a Z- type pop-up flash. In the position shown here it offers direct flash, but it snaps back to a 45° position for bouncing off a ceiling or a wall

up against

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

OLYMPUS E-330

£720

what we think

WHAT WE LIKE:
Fun handling; build quality; lens; image tonality; useful set of film modes

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Price; limited system; Live view has limitations; small number of AF points

TESTED OCTOBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	15

85%

see more on the web

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Panasonic *L1*

Panasonic introduces its first DSLR

So here it is, after much hype, waiting and anticipation. The Panasonic Lumix DMC-L1, the company's first DSLR.

FEATURES At the heart of the camera is the 4/3 Live MOS sensor, previously seen in the Olympus E-330. The sensor offers Live View – real-time viewing of the subject on the back LCD. Another of Olympus's technologies within the camera is the Supersonic Wave Filter dust-reduction system. Processing is performed by Panasonic Venus Engine, now at version III.

Panasonic has migrated features from the LC-1 such as the traditional shutter dial on the body and an aperture ring on the lens. Both have an auto setting, allowing aperture priority or shutter priority AE modes, or ignoring the A settings allows manual. Setting both to A gives full auto mode.

A couple of firsts on the camera also appear, buried in the menu. First you have the option to switch the aspect ratio, from 4:3 to 3:2 or 16:9. Both these formats use less of the sensor area though, so essentially are a crop of the imaging area. Second, the camera is billed as the first to have Extra Optical Zoom, with a 1.5x extension to the focal length of the lens attached – actually in this mode, just a section of the sensor is used, to produce a 3MP image, so, the camera is cropping.

Like the LC-1 before it, the L1 has the ingenious 'Z' built-in flash. Folded flat into the top-plate the flash offers two positions, straight on and 45° for bounce flash either from the ceiling or from a wall if the camera is held in portrait position. There's also a hotshoe to accept Panasonic's FL500 and FL360 flash units that look suspiciously like Olympus FL50 and FL36 flashguns.

DESIGN The camera is well made and feels solid. The main controls are secure, and reasonably well spaced, but the 2.5inch screen takes up a lot of real estate so some people may feel that the back of the camera is cramped.

PERFORMANCE The biggest handling issues concern the aperture ring and shutter, which is like going back in time and simply fun! The system worked for years so why did we change it? The viewfinder is small, but has a high profile, so is clear.

IMAGE QUALITY The L1 can produce some fine images, and there is a lovely tonality to them. However, this tonal smoothness comes at a cost, as images usually need just a little sharpening to give them a lift, particularly when viewed close-up on screen, or if printed to a decent size. For the most part the L1 produces images with good colour saturation, excellent tonality and, at ISO 100 and 200, reasonable, visually excellent noise control.

VALUE The L1 is more expensive than its competitors and I doubt the Panasonic name justifies the price.

VERDICT

The L1 is worth considering – particularly if you are new to automated cameras, maybe coming from older analogue models, or if you're enough of a traditionalist to miss the operation of those cameras. Shame about the price, though. **WDC**

APERTURE RING
Call me old-fashioned, but I miss this on modern cameras. Anyone who started their photography in the last century may recognise the traditional aperture ring

SHUTTER SPEED DIAL
Another retro feature harking back to the days of manual analogue cameras, the shutter speed dial is a walk down memory lane

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CANON EOS 5D

£1800 Estimated Street Price

RRP £2500

13 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 13.3/12.8MP effective
- **LENS** Interchangeable Canon EF
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/8000sec & B
- **ISO** 100-1600
- **EXP MODES** P, A, S, M
- **FLASH** PC socket, hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Opt/2.5in LCD
- **OTHER** CF I/II, USB 2.0, sRGB and Adobe colour space, PictureStyle
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 152 x 113 x 75mm/810g

back view

The top of the camera is strikingly similar to the 20D. The LCD displays info about the camera settings

front view

The mount is compatible with Canon EF-lenses with no multiplication factor. EF-S lenses cannot be used

side view

The 5D is constructed from Magnesium alloy and plastic. The CompactFlash or Microdrive fit under a door on the side

up *against*

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NIKON D2XS

£3200

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Well built, good features, speed of use, images

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Some fiddly controls, very faint edge fringing

TESTED DECEMBER 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	19
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	19
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	18

91%

see more *on the web*

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Canon *EOS 5D*

Bring out your old film wideangle lenses

The EOS 5D has 13 million pixels spread out in a lovely rectangular grid in a full-frame sensor. Full frame is an imaging area the same size as a frame of 35mm film, or 24x36mm. Other cameras with this sized sensor have been aimed at the professional, or very rich enthusiast. The EOS 5D differs because Canon is aiming it at the enthusiast – although the fairly well-heeled one.

FEATURES The sensor is a CMOS type, larger than is usually found in most DSLRs, so the size, or pixel pitch, of the individual sensor is larger. This means it should display less noise and have a greater dynamic range than DSLRs that use the APS-C sized chip.

Canon has developed a new system of image processing, essentially an advanced form of scene modes. Picture Style lets you set processing profiles in the camera. Three custom options are available, to which you can add your own parameters or download custom versions from Canon's website. The good thing is that it can work with RAW images. The 5D still has a standard approach to ICC profiles.

The 5D boasts several options that push it into the semi-pro or even professional bracket. It has no built-in flash, but there's a PC sync socket for external flash, so it can easily be used in the studio.

DESIGN The magnesium alloy body may not be up to the rigours of the Iraqi desert, but is tough enough to take the knocks of everyday life. The grip feels secure, and the buttons and controls on the camera are far from flimsy to the touch. The camera controls are closer to that of the 20D, better serving the needs of the advanced enthusiast, or semi-pro, making it an attractive choice to those who wish to upgrade from a 20D or 10D. The camera will feel natural and intuitive. An issue is Canon's insistence on putting the depth-of-field preview in an awkward place. The Exposure Compensation system is also not immediately obvious.

PERFORMANCE The 5D offers a respectable 3fps over 60 frames in JPEG mode. The initial RAW file is between 10 and 14MB, while a compressed JPEG is around 5MB. The processing power and memory buffer size needed to process three of those a second 60 times, without a break, is quite impressive. The camera's noise-reduction system seems to make the camera add a blur over the image to hide the noise rather than remove it, so images look less sharp.

IMAGE QUALITY The problem with full-frame cameras is that you're more likely to use older lenses, and unless you've spent on quality optics in the first place, image quality will suffer in comparison to film, especially at the edges. Newer lenses are better, though. There is minor purple fringing and some loss of definition, but results tended to be first rate – especially RAW images. JPEGs will always show some slight image degradation. There's noise from ISO 800 on, but it's extremely well controlled.

VERDICT

A superb camera, with only minor niggles, mainly ones that can be levelled at any Canon camera. In terms of performance and image quality, there's not much this camera can't do and it should win many fans. **WDC**

LCD MONITOR
The 2.5inch LCD is the largest yet on a Canon camera, showing plenty of image detail, especially when used with the magnify tool for sharpness checks. The menu is colour coded and follows previous Canon designs.
It's in here you'll find the new Picture Style function

SCROLL WHEEL
Instead of a button cluster, the Canon uses a scroll wheel to navigate the menus and pictures (in review mode).
When the power button is switched to the dial indicator, the EV compensation is activated

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NIKON D2Hs

£2100 Estimated Street Price

RRP £2500

4 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 4MP effective JFET
- **LENS** Nikon fit
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/8000sec &B
- **ISO** 200-1600
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, A, S, M, ±5EV
- **FLASH** Hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Opt / 2.5" LCD
- **OTHER** CF, 9fps, RAW, TIFF, JPEG, USB 2.0
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 158 x 150 x 86 mm/ 1150g

back view

The D2Hs is a big beast but handles well, with good balance and well-placed controls

front view

The bottom right of the grip has a pair of auxiliary control wheels and shutter release button

side view

Connections include USB 2.0, remote control and GPS

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

CANON 1D MK IIN

£2700

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Good handling, image quality and system support, speed

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
4MP may not be enough

TESTED OCTOBER 2005

FEATURES	Specifications, controls	19
DESIGN	Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE	Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY	Sharpness, colour etc	19
VALUE	Based on RRP	18

91%

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Nikon *D2HS*

You want speed? You won't do better than the Nikon D2Hs

The D2Hs is no ordinary 4MP camera. Nikon makes two versions of its top-end camera, the D2X and D2Hs, the latter of which has replaced the D2H. Both are aimed at pros, but within different markets. The D2Hs is about speed: of shooting and of transfer.

FEATURES But what can 4MP offer? It's good enough for newsprint, and this camera is aimed at news and sports photographers. They could use the optional Wi-Fi adapter and have their photos at a news desk in seconds. It boasts up to 9fps in high-speed mode, or customised settings of 1-7fps in low-speed mode. The camera buffer can hold up to 50 JPEGs, enough to maintain a fairly constant burst.

The camera has a single card slot, accepting CF cards and Microdrive. As well as JPEG, other formats are supported including Nikon Electronic Files (NEF), Nikon's raw format. The camera gives you the option of shooting in TIFF, as well as a choice of RAW + JPEG options. The camera works best with CPU-type lenses, ideally type G or D to maintain full functionality. It has the new 3D Colour Matrix II which uses a 1005-pixel RGB sensor and sets the exposure on a variety of information across the entire frame. Among the information analysed is colour and distance.

DESIGN This is a camera built to last – it can withstand temperatures of 0-40°C. While a heavy camera, it's well balanced even with big lenses, and holds very well. For portrait-format shooting, there's a secondary shutter release button bottom right, accompanied by front and rear command dials to rapidly change camera settings while you shoot.

The viewfinder is bright and clear and can be depended upon to provide comprehensive information while you shoot. Meanwhile, the back plate has the 2.5in LCD, with menu access and image playback. The menu can seem somewhat complicated on initial set-up, with a plethora of options, but this is generally expected on pro model DSLRs.

PERFORMANCE A fast camera needs a fast and accurate AF system. The D2Hs uses Nikon's Multi-Cam2000 module, with single-area AF, dynamic AF, group dynamic AF and dynamic area AF, with closest subject focusing. The white balance uses the 1005-pixel metering sensor in auto mode, along with 5 preset manual modes with fine tuning, and a manual mode. Further image control is set by a range of sharpening, contrast and colour modes, including two sRGB options and Adobe RGB.

IMAGE QUALITY Dynamic range is very good, with good shadow and highlight detail. Contrasty images cause problems, with highlights blowing, but that's to be expected. Colour too is excellent, with the benefits of the 3D colour matrix metering showing through. Noise is good too: the large pixel pitch seems to be a benefit, with even the higher ISO images remarkably noise free. The Noise Reduction option works well at ISO 1600.

VERDICT

The D2Hs is fast, furious and fun to handle, and is backed by a complete professional system. As good as the camera is, it is still only 4MP. If you're a Nikon user and need a fast, reliable camera, the D2Hs may be right up your street. **WDC**

LCD SCREEN
The 2.5 inch LCD is easy to see and is accompanied by Nikon's comprehensive and easy scrolling menu system

SECONDARY LCD
This is used to access oft-changed functions such as ISO, WB, and image quality

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AF-S Nikkor
10.5mm f/2.8G DX, 12-24mm f/4G IF-ED DX, 17-35mm f/2.8D, 17-55mm f/2.8G DX IF-ED, 18-200mm f/3.5-5.6G VR DX IF-ED, 24-85mm f/3.5-4.5G, 28-70mm f/2.8D, 70-200mm f/2.8G VR AF-S, 80-200mm f/2.8D, 200mm f/2G VR IF-ED, 300mm f/2.8D, 200-400mm f/4G VR IF-ED, 300mm f/4, 500mm f /4D, TC-14E, TC-17E, TC-20E

AF Micro-Nikkor
60mm f/2.8D, 105mm f/2.8D, 200mm f/4D 70-180mm f/4.5-5.6D, 85mm f2.8D P. C.

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CANON EOS 1D MK II N

£2700 Estimated Street Price

RRP £3050

8 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** APS-C 28.7x19.1mm CMOS, 8.2 MP effective
- **LENS** Canon EF
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30 – 1/8000th sec & B
- **ISO** 100-1600 boost of 50 & 3200
- **EXP MODES** P, A, S, M, Custom, Picture Style
- **FLASH** Hotshoe/PC Socket
- **VIEWFINDER** Pentaprism 100% view
- **MONITOR** 2.5-inch LCD 230,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD/CF, RAW, JPEG, 8.5fps 48 frames JPEG, 20 RAW, dual card recording
- **POWER** Canon Ni-MH
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 156 x 158 x 80mm/1225g

back view

This is a large camera aimed at professionals. The new 2.5inch screen is one of the highlights; the small grey screen shows digital info

top view

Most of the camera's essential operational modes are chosen via the button grouping on the left. The LCD screen shows shooting info

side view

Heavy-duty rubber covers protect the camera's ports. The large battery is situated below and is retracted by a turning lock and release button

up *against*

CHECK OUT THIS SIMILAR CAMERA IN OUR PRICE COMPARISON BEFORE YOU BUY

NIKON D2HS

£2100

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Image quality, speed, build quality

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Expensive compared to the competition (Nikon D2HS)

TESTED MARCH 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	19
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	19
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	19
VALUE Based on RRP	17

91%

see more *on the web*

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Canon *1D MKII N*

This new DSLR is an upgrade of the 1D MkII

The latest Canon model is more of an upgrade than a major new model. Most of the features of the old camera are intact, so for further reading of those, please refer to our 1D Mk II review of July 2004.

FEATURES The first difference between this and the older model is the size of the LCD on the back of the camera, increased from 2in to 2.5in.

Another big change is the camera's burst rate. The 1D Mk II camera now offers 48 frame JPEG continuous shooting at 8.5 frames per second, and the dual card slot can now save the RAW files to CD and simultaneously record JPEGs to SD.

The camera also features Canon's Picture Style solution.

DESIGN The tough, yet heavy, camera has an ergonomic design and fits the hands well, and includes a secondary shutter release button and control dial for vertical-format shooting. The camera remains well protected and sealed in less-than-friendly environments.

PERFORMANCE Startup time and the AF system, particularly the continuous AF servo, are very impressive. Most impressive, though, is the continuous burst, with 48 frames rattling off in 10 seconds on a SanDisk Extreme II SD card. A minute's worth of shooting produces 123 images. One of the newer, faster cards would be expected to perform better. To help put these figures in perspective, imagine shooting a roll of 36-exposure film – you would need to change the roll after seven seconds. Those extra eight frames over the original 1D Mk II and the faster clearance of the buffer could make the difference to a pro shooting at the FA Cup.

IMAGE QUALITY Optimum image quality is generally achieved at ISO 100, which is hardly a groundbreaking conclusion. However, Canon's CMOS sensor continues to perform well as the ISO is raised. Even ISO 800 displays very little noise, while the higher reaches produce more-than-acceptable results. Again this could prove vital to a photojournalist shooting in natural light and wanting usable results. Whether you like the Picture Style mode or not, it does provide a decent enhancement to JPEGs and will speed up the workflow in certain applications.

VALUE The extra features on the Mk II N probably don't warrant an upgrade from the older model for most people, and the Nikon D2HS has similar performance for a lower price. If you're buying for speed, though, and you've got Canon lenses, then the EOS 1D Mk II N is the only choice.

VERDICT

As an update to the original, the Canon 1D Mk II N is not a significant camera, and may not be worth the investment to some people. However, it is still a very nice camera indeed and one that continues to enhance Canon's legacy and reputation. **WDC**

MONITOR
The enlarged 2.5in monitor is operated by holding the buttons and turning the large dial on the right. Press and hold 'menu' to switch menu screens; press and hold 'select' to scroll through the subheadings

CONTROL WHEEL
The large control wheel is at the heart of the camera and changes everything from aperture and menu items to AF points. It also allows image review scrolling

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NIKON D2XS

£3200 Estimated Street Price

RRP £3500

12 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 12.2MP, 23.5 x 15.7mm CMOS
- **LENS** Nikon mount
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/8000sec, bulb
- **ISO** 100-3200
- **EXP MODES** P, A, S,M
- **FLASH** Hotshoe, PC socket
- **VIEWFINDER** Pentaprism, 100% view
- **MONITOR** 2.5-inch
- **OTHER** CF, RAW, JPEG
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 158 x 150 x 86 mm/ 1070g

back view

While Nikon hasn't changed the LCD size, it has improved the viewing angle of the monitor, with 170° horizontal and vertical viewing

top view

The top-plate grey LCD is comprehensive, with shooting information, battery gauge, and buffer/image counter

side view

The ports are well-protected, and include remote, AV and USB ports. And of course there's a flash PC socket onboard

up *against*

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CANON 5D

£1800

what we *think*

WHAT WE LIKE:
Excellent build, great image quality, some notable improvements

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Single card slot, buffer memory could be faster

TESTED NOVEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	19
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	20
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	19
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	19
VALUE Based on RRP	18

95%

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Nikon *D2Xs*

The Nikon D2Xs has no fewer than 20 improvements

Generally, updated models are not worth existing users upgrading, unless there's a major benefit to their work. But in the case of the D2Xs there are 20 improvements in all.

FEATURES This is a replacement for the Nikon D2X, and the fundamentals of that camera remain unchanged. The camera still has the 12.4million pixel CMOS sensor and has the same photographic controls and functionality of the original. Closer inspection reveals that the viewfinder is brighter with a new Brite-View Clear Matte Mark III screen. Nikon has improved the viewfinder's functionality in the high-speed crop mode by shading the extraneous area in the viewfinder; furthermore, the Colour Matrix Metering has been improved to allow for the smaller image format, instead of metering from the full area.

There's improved tracking in continuous AF mode and better subject finding, thanks to the Multi-Cam2000 AF module. Another major improvement is the inclusion of Adobe RGB in all three-colour modes. Nikon has also added more custom curves and custom-function options as well as an in-camera crop feature and a b/w option, available as a NEF and JPEG file. Nikon has lengthened the battery life, allowing up to 3,800 images on a single charge.

DESIGN As with the previous model, there is much to like in the D2Xs. I adore the way this camera feels. It's big and reasonably heavy, but the magnesium shell is tough and commands respect. Despite the high-end, high-tech features, the camera can be as simple as you want it to be; however, it's good that it offers so much more – and all fairly easily. The menu system is especially clear and easy to navigate, and the D2Xs is endlessly adaptable to suit the photographer's working methods or personal style.

PERFORMANCE There is little to criticise, though it would be nice to have a bigger buffer memory. In high-speed crop mode, it rattles off at a fair old pace, but slows down after 20 secs or so. A few seconds' rest gets the pace back up, though. Bearing in mind that the D2Hs has just 4MP and only offers 1fps more than the D2Xs, this high-speed crop mode makes the D2Xs a more versatile choice for fast shooters.

IMAGE QUALITY Nikon has done a good job with the image-rendering on the D2Xs. The colour is geared towards professional use, with less saturation than a consumer DSLR at default. Similarly, our tests of the Auto White Balance proved very accurate. Exposure, too, is spot on most of the time, with seldom a reason to change metering modes from matrix.

VALUE As Nikon's top model this is expensive, but still much cheaper than Canon's equivalent. Whether the camera's resolution is good enough is a question for you and your clients, or repro house, but for the majority of jobs it is good enough.

VERDICT

On its own merits as a standalone camera, the D2Xs is a fine example of optical and digital technology combined and, as such, is highly desirable. **WDC**

MODE DIAL
Offers access to bracketing, flash and drive modes, including the continuous full-frame drive mode up to 5fps. The Hi-Speed cropped mode is changed via the camera's menu for 8fps shooting at 6.7MP

TOP-PLATE LCD
The grey LCD panel shows all the exposure settings and operational focus points. It also displays the buffer count and frames remaining on the media card. The new battery gauge is claimed to be more accurate

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CANON EOS 1DS MKII

£4700 Estimated Street Price

RRP £6000

16 mega pixels

- **CMOS** 16.7MP effective Full frame
- **LENS** Interchangeable EF mount
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/8000sec & B
- **ISO** 100-1600 (expandable to 50 and 3200)
- **EXPOSURE MODES** M, A, S, P
- **FLASH** Hotshoe/ PC (X-sync)
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** Real-size optical/ 2in LCD
- **OTHER** SD, CF I&II, JPEG, RAW, JPEG+RAW
- **POWER** NiMH pack
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 156 x 158 x 80 mm/1215g

back view

The camera doesn't look too different from the previous 1Ds, with clearly labelled and easy-to-use buttons

front view

The 1Ds Mk II accepts EF mount lenses (not EF-S) and has a 35mm-sized CMOS sensor

side view

Rubber covers protect the ports, and the large Lithium-Ion battery slides into the underside grip

up against

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KODAK PRO SLR/C

Discontinued

what we think

WHAT WE LIKE:
Superb image quality, camera body design

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
None really, but a larger LCD would be nice

FEATURES Specifications, controls	19
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	19
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	20
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	20
VALUE Based on RRP	18

TESTED AUGUST 2005

96%

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WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

Canon EOS 1DS MKII

A top-end Digital SLR successor to the impressive Mark 1

The most obvious difference with the new flagship MkII camera is the 16.7-Megapixel full-frame CMOS sensor with a built-in low pass filter. The DIGIC II processor provides improved image quality and a faster startup time of 0.3 seconds.

FEATURES There's a huge instruction manual, but the quick-start guide will get you shooting straight away. You can for example, extend the ISO range from 50–3200, while in JPEG capture mode there are four choices of pixel capture size, from 4992 x 3328 pixels, down to 2496 x 1664 pixels, with a choice of 10 user-configurable JPEG compression settings, a choice of Adobe RGB and sRGB colour spaces and a five-level contrast tone and saturation controls.

The 2in LCD has 230,000 pixels, almost twice that of the MkI. There is a x10 playback zoom button and image scroll controls as well as an image-orientation sensor. The EF lens mount gives you access to nearly all the lenses in the Canon system spanning from 14mm to 1200mm. And as the sensor is full frame, the lenses' focal lengths are as stated.

DESIGN The weather-resistant magnesium body of the 1DS Mk II is rugged as ever and has several nice design improvements.

PERFORMANCE The new MkII battery promises a battery life up to 1200 shots at 20°C. The shutter system is durable with a projected life of 200,000 cycles, offering speeds of 30-1/8000sec. As for fosusing, the 45-point AF system includes a very accurate predictive servo focusing system. Meanwhile, the Evaluative Through-The-Lens auto-flash system gives it a distance-linked precision flash system that is accurate and reliable. The E-TTL II is able to achieve the correct exposure, particularly with bright or reflective objects.

There is no support for the Adobe DNG file format. But it would be unfair to draw any negative conclusions at this stage, as the Canon EOS 1Ds Mk II was announced at the same time as the launch of DNG. The Mk II ships with an updated version of the Digital Photo Professional software – processing the CR2 (Camera Raw 2) raw file six times faster than the basic EOS Camera utility.

However, it is still slower compared to opening the same raw files in Photoshop CS or Phase One's Capture One program. Digital Photo Professional will at the very least provide purchasers of the camera with software that can manage and edit raw capture files at a basic level. But it is still no match for the sophistication of Phase One's Capture One or the Adobe Photoshop Camera Raw plug-in that ships with Photoshop CS.

IMAGE QUALITY The image quality is quite remarkable, provided that you use the best-quality lenses, and the images are the smoothest and sharpest yet seen from any digital SLR.

VERDICT

The EOS MkII offers the best image quality compared to any other digital SLR and has the most pixels. It represents excellent value for money, but only if you are selling lots of pictures on a weekly basis. As far as professional users will be concerned, this is definitely the camera that all others shall be judged against. **WDC**

LCD SCREEN
Canon has increased the screen resolution of the 2in LCD, now with 230,000 pixels. The menu follows Canon's five-screen format

MEDIA CARD COVER
A locking door protects the dual-slot media card compartment. The 1Ds MkII accepts CF I&II, including FAT 32 High-capacity cards and allows simultaneous recording to Secure Digital media

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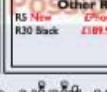

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- Slim, lightweight design

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FUJIFILM FINEPIX A400

£90 Estimated Street Price

RRP £100

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5"CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 4.1MP
- **LENS** 6.4-19.2mm (38-114mm) f/3.3-5.5
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 2-1/1500sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P + 4 scene
- **ISO** Auto, 100-400
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 1.8in 77,000 pixel LCD
- **OTHER** Pictbridge, xD
- **POWER** 2xAA
- **DIMENSIONS/ WEIGHT** 93 x 60 x 27.5mm/ 126g

4 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Easy to use, nice results

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Bulky, plasticky and slow

TESTED JULY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	14
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	18

81%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Fujifilm A400

Fuji's £100 model delivers good pics at a great price

Fujifilm's budget model is simple in specification but is aimed at those looking for good results with the minimum of fuss.

FEATURES The bare bones are not much different from the complete list: the 4MP chip (delivering 2304x1728 pixel images) is complemented by a 3x zoom; there are four scene modes, an auto mode, three ISO settings, six white balance settings and five flash modes. There is a normal and a macro focus option, an exposure compensation setting and 320x240 movie shooting – and that's about it.

DESIGN It's a bulky model even with its small LCD (1.8inch) and is a largely plastic camera. There are few buttons though, so it really is easy to use.

PERFORMANCE The sparse specification does not mean the performance is lowly, though. Most functions are automatic but quite capable. Focusing occasionally struggles with low-contrast scenes, but exposures are excellent.

IMAGE QUALITY Despite the 4MP resolution, images were nicely captured. There was some blockiness in low-light settings but generally images are successfully rendered and subtly so.

VALUE As a camera doing what you want it to at a reasonable price then it is very good value. If you measure it by pages of specification per hundred pounds, the A400 doesn't seem terribly good value.

VERDICT For the beginner or otherwise undemanding user, a reasonable value option. **WDC**

OLYMPUS FE-115

£100 Estimated Street Price

RRP £120

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 5MP
- **LENS** 6.2-17.4mm (38-106mm) f/3.0-5.0
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 2-1/2000sec
- **ISO** Auto, 64-400
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, 5 scene modes, Mov
- **FLASH** GN 7m
- **VIEWFINDER** No
- **MONITOR** 1.5in LCD, 130,000 pixels
- **OTHER** xD
- **POWER** 2xAA
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 87.5 x 62.5 x 38.5mm/140g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Very simple to use

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Purple fringing, slow performance, tiny LCD

TESTED AUGUST 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	15
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	15
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	12
VALUE Based on RRP	13

71%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Olympus FE-115

This budget camera fails to inspire

Olympus continues to churn out entry-level models in its FE series, and the FE-115 is the latest in the line.

FEATURES It's not that long since a 5MP camera would have cost £500; now there's no end in the budget area of the market. This one also benefits from a 2.8x zoom, and offers 28MB of internal memory as well as xD card compatibility.

DESIGN The chunky camera has a plastic body, with quite nice curves. The 1.5in LCD monitor looks tiny in comparison to those seen on more expensive models, and it's the only way to compose and view your images. Button placement is simple, with a mode dial on the right, that can be easily knocked.

PERFORMANCE Using some low-end cameras is like going back two years. The Olympus FE-115 is slow to take a picture and even slower to write it to a card. This isn't a high-speed shooter, though it's not the worst camera I've used in this respect. Some features are useful, such as the digital image stabilisation, which works to a point.

IMAGE QUALITY Exposure is pretty good and colour not bad. But are you the kind of person who goes to the hairdresser for a bit off the fringe? Then you won't like the pictures, as fringing is pretty bad throughout the images.

VALUE Every now and then we look at entry-level cameras, and they continue to disappoint. This Olympus model is no exception. Really – save up a little bit longer to avoid disappointment.

VERDICT Ignore the promise of high resolution – this isn't even as good as last year's 3MP models. **WDC**

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NIKON COOLPIX 4600

£120 Estimated Street Price

RRP £149

- **CCD:** 3.9MP effective
- **LENS:** 34-102mm
- **SHUTTER SPEED:** 4-1/3000sec
- **ISO:** Auto
- **EXPOSURE MODES:** P, Sc, Mov, ±2EV
- **FLASH:** Built in, GN 3.3m
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR:** Optical/1.8in
- **OTHER:** 14MB internal memory, SD, Best Shot Selector, auto and manual focus, USB
- **POWER:** 2x AA
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT:** 85x60x35mm/130g

4 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Simple to use, good price, punchy results

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: May be too basic for some, difficulty resolving fine detail

TESTED MAY 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	14
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	15
VALUE Based on RRP	18

81%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Nikon Coolpix 4600

This model impresses with nice, punchy images

This is the first camera I can recall seeing with a Cyanotype mode. For those who don't know, cyanotype is a Victorian photographic process. So now we can shoot in sepia or as a cyanotype, just as great granddad did. What's next, an albumen or dagurreotype mode? Actually, the so-called cyanotype mode in the 4600 is a black & white mode in the colour menu that adds a blue tint to the image, much as the sepia mode adds a brown tint.

In most respects, the camera is a fairly bog-standard compact. What's notable is the £150 price – for a 4MP Nikon camera, that would have been unthinkable two years ago. If you blink, you'll miss a notable detail in the spec, which is the 1/3000sec minimum shutter speed. This is all the more remarkable considering many cameras at twice the price offer less than half the speed.

Most of the camera's operation is automatic, though. ISO, shutter apertures and so forth are all set by the on-board computer, while 16 scene modes allow you to optimise the Coolpix for different conditions. These make for an uncomplicated no-nonsense camera whose images are warm, punchy and sharp – exactly the way a consumer camera should be. There are some problems resolving difficult details, but this doesn't show on 6x4in prints.

VERDICT The 4600 is a perfect camera for those who don't expect much more than good-looking holiday snaps and simple operation. **WDC**

NIKON COOLPIX L3

£120 Estimated Street Price

RRP £170

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5"(5.76x4.29mm)CCD 5MP
- **LENS** 6.3-19.2mm (38-116mm) f/3.2-5.3
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 4-1/500sec
- **ISO** Auto, 50-200
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Program AE, exp comp
- **FLASH** 0.3-3m W/0.3-1.75m T
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2" LCD
- **OTHER** SD
- **POWER** 2x AA
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 91x60.5x26mm/120g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Pleasant design and easy enough to use

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Disappointing image quality, generally bland

TESTED JUNE 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	15
VALUE Based on RRP	15

81%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Nikon Coolpix L3

An entry-level 5MP camera

Probably the biggest sector of cameras in an ever-fractured market is the 5MP/3x zoom market. And prices can vary enormously, from sub £100 to more than £200.

FEATURES The L3 has some of Nikon's more interesting features beneath the bonnet, including D-Lighting for evening out the contrast in flash pictures, and the face-priority AF mode, which focuses on any big pink area in portrait mode.

DESIGN The slim camera is well built with a combination of metal and plastic body. The 2in screen is clear, but seems small compared to some cameras.

HANDLING As an entry-level camera, Nikon has managed to keep it impressively small, without compromising the handling. It's a comfortable camera, and the smallish screen means back real estate is plentiful and allows good-sized buttons.

IMAGE QUALITY This is really where the camera falls down. While colour and exposure are generally good, the small sensor produces too much noise, even at ISO 50 – particularly in shadow areas. Higher-contrast images display some fringing, and there is often a lack of detail in some images, especially macro shots.

VALUE There's a premium for the Nikon name, and paying full price is probably to be avoided. However, if you can find the camera for less than £150, it would be better value.

VERDICT Overall this is a rather bland, entry-level camera that produces average results. **WDC**

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Image shown is made for Canon 20D

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Available for all SLR's - £24.99

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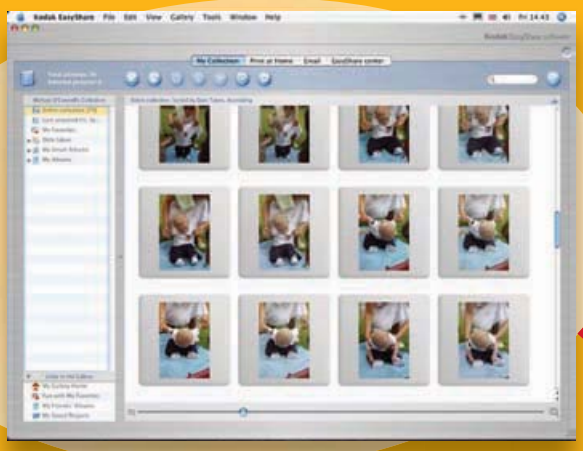
Kodak EasyShare

KODAK EASYSHARE G600 PRINTER DOCK

Now those with an active lifestyle can achieve high quality photo prints on the go, thanks to the cleverly designed Kodak EasyShare G600 Printer Dock with carry handle, smart paper tray storage and rechargeable battery. Hassle free laminated hard copies to last a lifetime are achievable in just 60 seconds at the touch of a button. Your EasyShare camera simply sits on top of the device – no cables required. The latest generation model offers print connectivity with PictBridge and Imagelink devices, enabling it to be used independently of your PC for the ultimate in user-friendly convenience and portability.

KODAK EASYSHARE V705 CAMERA

Get the big picture with the stylish Kodak EasyShare V705 dual lens digital camera, the world's smallest ultra-wide-angle zoom compact. Remarkable images are guaranteed by twin 7.1 megapixel sensors and from both 23mm and 5x optical zoom Schneider-Kreuznach C-Variogon lenses. Further innovative functions include Kodak Perfect Touch and anti blur technology for brighter, better photos, plus 22 scene modes, three colour modes and high quality MPEG-4 video, adding up to a feature-rich package for the digital photo enthusiast.



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Organise, print, share and get creative with your image files the easy way with the latest version of Kodak's free EasyShare software – so simple that all the family will be able to enjoy. Version 6.0 includes a new easy-to-navigate user interface, plus a host of creative projects including a photo card printing feature that turns images into invitations!

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Kodak

BENQ DC E600

£130 Estimated Street Price

RRP £130

- **SENSOR** 6.19MP CCD
- **LENS** 35-105mm f/2.8-4.8
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 4-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, Auto, 6 Scene
- **ISO** Auto, 100-400
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in 230,000 pixel LCD
- **OTHER** Rotating front lens, SD
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/ WEIGHT** 92 x 60 x 24.5mm/135g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: All you need in order to take decent pictures

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Looks good but feels plasticky; a touch slow

TESTED JUNE 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

83%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

BenQ DC-E600

Nice pictures are produced by this budget camera

BenQ makes surprisingly well-specified cameras at reasonable prices. To get to the next level it has to be able to make real quality cameras. The DC E600 is a reasonable attempt to make that transition.

FEATURES It has a 6MP sensor, and a 35mm-105mm lens in a stylish and compact casing, with a 2.5inch LCD. There's a nine-point focusing system, a broad range of shutter speeds and plenty of extras in the menu. The camera presses all the right buttons on the specification front.

DESIGN The shiny plastic where there should be metal lets the camera down. In handling terms, the button placement and style is largely excellent.

PERFORMANCE The E600's turn on speed and focusing speed are considered rather than frenetic, but it does the job. Other than a touch of barrel distortion at the widest angle setting when shooting close-up, I had no performance complaints.

IMAGE QUALITY With the exception of the occasionally yellowish tinge in scenes with lots of blue, there is nothing at all wrong with the pictures. Images were not overly processed by the camera.

VALUE This is where the BenQ camera really comes into its own. You get an excellent camera at a bargain price.

VERDICT The BenQ DC E600 is a very capable camera in a nicely designed shell, that produces largely excellent pictures. **WDC**

PENTAX OPTIO M10

£130 Estimated Street Price

RRP £169

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5-inch CCD (5.8x4.29mm) 6MP
- **LENS** Fujinon 5.8mm-17.4mm f2.8 – 4.9 (35-105mm 35mm equivalent)
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 1/1500-4sec
- **ISO** Auto, M, 64, 100, 200, 400
- **EXPOSURE MODES:** Auto, Program, 13 scene modes
- **FLASH** Auto plus five modes
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5inch LCD
- **OTHER** SD
- **POWER** 2 x AA
- **SIZE/WEIGHT:** 89 x 59.5 x 24.5mm/120g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Low price, solid specification, usability

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Unpredictable image quality and some operational quirks

TESTED JULY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	15
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	15
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	18

80%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Pentax M10

A 6MP budget-priced entry to the Optio compact range

Billed by Pentax as a 'versatile digital camera for novice and experienced users alike', this budget compact has been unleashed.

FEATURES Predictably for a camera at this price point, the sepcification is basic. Sensitivity ranges from 64-400, the zoom is an average 3x optical and its trio of automatic focusing modes include 9-point multi AF, Spot and tracking AF. Battery life is 220 shots.

DESIGN The M10 is pleasingly slimline, but offers enough subtle bulk to prevent its controls from feeling fussy.

PERFORMANCE Powering up in just under two seconds, the M10 is generally a user-friendly compact.

IMAGE QUALITY The quality of results is unpredictable, a matter that is not helped by an imprecise LCD which makes it difficult to judge results. While the M10 is capable of generating some excellent shots, reaching this goal can take numerous attempts. Our main complaint is a lack of contrast within the images, and a flat tonal range that fails to give decent definition.

VALUE Its solid specifications and image quality are favourable considering the price and, though there are better cameras in this corner of the market, M10 users should be happy in the knowledge that they've bagged a bargain.

VERDICT For the money it's a bargain. But despite a solid performance and set of specifications, Pentax should watch out for fast-rising rivals who inject a little more style and innovation into their products. **WDC**

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SONY CYBER-SHOT S600

£130 Estimated Street Price

RRP £160

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5in Super HAD CCD (5.75 x 4.29mm) 6MP
- **LENS** 5.1-15.3mm f2.8-5.1 (31-93mm equiv)
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 1/8-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Program, Auto ±2EV
- **ISO** 80-1000
- **FLASH** 4 modes up to 7m
- **VIEWFINDER** Optical
- **MONITOR** 2in LCD, 85,000 pixels
- **OTHER** MS Duo Pro, MPEG VX
- **POWER** 2x AA, Sony Stamina supplied
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 99 x 52 x 36.8mm/181g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
High ISO 1000, wide 31mm lens, reasonable price for a Sony

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Noise at ISO 1000, bland design, plastic body and general chunkiness

TESTED APRIL 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	15
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

82%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Sony S600

This Sony boasts an impressive sensitivity range

On first look the S600 is rather run-of-the-mill but with some stand out features.

FEATURES The camera has 6 million pixels, and a 3x zoom with a Carl Zeiss branded lens. On the back is a standard two-inch monitor and a MPEG Movie VX function. A closer look will show something more unusual: sensitivity of up to ISO 1000. There are few cameras that come close to this ISO, especially in this price bracket.

PERFORMANCE Most of the camera is automatic, making it ideal for new users. It does well in timing, with a quick startup, reasonably fast shot-to-shot time, and little shutter lag.

DESIGN Sony compacts have always followed a certain design brief. I find it bland, but functional and well laid out, if not a little chunky.

IMAGE QUALITY There are WB options, EV compensation and so on, but most may use the camera's judgement on its JPEGS. Colour and exposure is reasonable, sharpness is good, if a bit overprocessed, and noise at the lower ISO range is good.

VALUE Sony is a blue-chip brand, and with the name on the front, people will happily pay more. Considering the name, the output, and the extra features, the S600 is pretty good value.

VERDICT Despite the high ISO and wide lens, not a stand-out model. For family snaps, the S600 will perform nicely; if you want more, look elsewhere. **WDC**

BENQ DC P500

£140 Estimated Street Price

RRP £140

- **SENSOR** 4.9MP CCD
- **LENS** 5.8-29mm (35-180mm) f/2.8-4.7
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 4-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, M, Sc, Mov
- **ISO** Auto, 100-400
- **FLASH** 0.5-2m
- **VIEWFINDER** No
- **MONITOR** 2.5in LCD, 230,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, 32MB Int, 30fps Mov
- **POWER** Li-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/ WEIGHT** 96 x 60 x 29.6mm/165g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Price, good for complete novice

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Weird EXIF, over sharpening, limited, slow

TESTED DECEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	15
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	15
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	15
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	15
VALUE Based on RRP	16

76%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

BenQ DC P500

Basic entry-level 5MP compact

The P stands for 'performance', which begs the question: What kind of performance can we expect from a 5MP compact for £140?

FEATURES This is a fairly basic camera, despite the tagline, with basic exposure control, and a manual mode that doesn't seem to do very much at all. It does offer a Pentax 5x zoom, and 30fps video.

DESIGN This is a solid if somewhat boxy model, but looks better than many other entry-level models thanks to its metal shell. The 2.5-in LCD screen is a welcome treat for a camera at this price, while controls are average.

PERFORMANCE The key word here. The camera's a little slow to start up, and there's some shutter lag too, which is expected to some degree on compacts, but this is worse than we'd expect. Strangely, the EXIF showed all my exposures were f/1 at 1 second at ISO 99. Every image was also rather hopefully tagged with 'My beautiful picture' in the description box!

IMAGE QUALITY My beautiful pictures are surprisingly reasonable, if a little over processed. Noise is visible in shadows, but there's plenty of detail and sharpness. Exposures are good too, despite the weird EXIF.

VALUE The addition of the 5x zoom makes the BenQ P500 reasonably priced for absolute beginners, but there are better cameras available.

VERDICT Hardly top notch but the camera might satisfy those wanting more than mobile phone pictures. **WDC**

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- 3X Optical Zoom
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6.0 MP

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£239.99 inc vat (£204.25 ex vat)

quicklinx 42R0DC

7.1 MP

- 7.1 Megapixel
- 5x optical zoom
- 23 scene modes

New Low Price Was £248.92 inc vat

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quicklinx 48HDDC

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- 3x optical zoom
- 3-inch LCD
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New Low Price Was £255.98 inc vat

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quicklinx 49QMDC

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FUJIFILM FINEPIX Z2

£150 Estimated Street Price

RRP £250

- SENSOR 1/2.5in CCD (5.75 x 4.29mm) 5.1MP
- LENS 36-108mm f3.5-4.0
- SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/1000 sec
- ISO Auto, 64, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600
- EXPOSURE MODES P, Auto, 5 scene modes
- FLASH 0.3m-3m (W)/ 0.6m-2.3m (T)
- VIEWFINDER None
- MONITOR 2.5in TFT 232,000 pixels
- OTHER xD, USB 2.0, 640x480 30fps movies
- POWER Lithium-ion
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 90 x 55.2 x 18.6mm/ 130g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: High sensitivity of ISO 1600. Well built, with stylish white option

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Lack of features, particularly metering. Can't zoom in movie mode

TESTED APRIL 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	17

84%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Fujifilm Z2

A nice but not radical update

Available in a choice of either black or white, the FinePix Z2 is the successor to last year's Z1, featuring Fujifilm's sixth-generation CCD.

FEATURES Alongside program and automatic are five scene modes including Natural Light, which turns off the flash to produce low light images. With the exception of exposure compensation, white balance and sensitivity, but there's no control over metering. Fujifilm has boosted the maximum sensitivity from ISO 800 in the Z1 to ISO 1600, for shooting in low light without flash. The lowest ISO option of 64 is also handy, for when you want to be sure to eliminate image noise.

DESIGN The Z2 is a slim 2cm deep, and the shutter and zoom are within easy reach, enabling you to comfortably operate the camera one handed. The single-shell metal body is tough, if scratch prone.

PERFORMANCE Boasting start-up times of under a second, the Fuji Z2 is certainly a nifty performer. Shutter lag isn't really an issue at all, and shot cycle-times are under two seconds for 5MP JPEGs at Fine quality; I took nearly 50 successive images, only stopping because the card was full. You have the option of choosing from multi or centre autofocusing which, while not particularly quick, is adequate, slowing down at telephoto.

IMAGE QUALITY Photos are adequate, but can be a little soft. Exposures are fine, though the Z2 struggles in high-contrast scenes, with evidence of burnt-out highlights.

VALUE Considering the limited feature set, the Z2 seems a little pricey. However, it is very stylish.

VERDICT The Fujifilm FinePix Z2 is a decent point and shooter with good design and some great features, particularly the ISO. **WDC**

SONY CYBERSHOT W7

£150 Estimated Street Price

RRP £329

- CCD 7.4MP Total 7.0MP effective
- LENS 7.9-23.7mm (38-114mm equivalent) f/2.8-5.2
- SHUTTER SPEED 30-1/1000sec
- ISO Auto plus ISO 100-400
- EXPOSURE MODES Auto, M, P+ 6 Scene
- FLASH Built-in
- VIEWFINDER/MONITOR Optical, 2.5" 130,000 pixel TFT
- OTHER MS slot, 32MB internal memory
- POWER 2xAA cells
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 91 x 60 x 37.1mm/253g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Great performer all round

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: High-resolution images!

TESTED JULY 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

86%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Sony Cyber-Shot W7

Sony's 7MP compact packs a punch but use it with care

The W7 has a 7.41MP chip that delivers images up to 3072 x 2304pixels, sufficient at 200ppi to let you print an image up to 15x11.5inches.

FEATURES It has no aperture settings between the maximum and minimum for any given focal length, but the W7 does have three metering patterns, three focusing modes and three main exposure modes as well as seven other shooting modes.

DESIGN Individual controls access resolution, flash, macro and the self-timer – everything else is tucked away in menus. The screen is excellent in colour accuracy and resolution.

PERFORMANCE Sony claims you can get 380 shots with flash from a single charge of the two supplied cells; the W7 is certainly sparing in its power consumption. It leaps into life and zips into focus quickly. A focus aiding pattern emitter comes into play when needed and zooming is fast without being too fast.

IMAGE QUALITY Generally, exposures are spot on and lens performance is very good. In good light it can deliver images of extraordinary clarity and detail, though not when the light falls.

VALUE It's not bad value considering its good performance, though it's even better value at street prices.

VERDICT There's a lot to like about the W7. In normal light levels it delivers crisp images. In lower light, use a tripod or set the camera to 5MP to get best results. **WDC**

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OLYMPUS MJU DIGITAL 600

£150 Estimated Street Price

RRP £220

- **CCD** 1/2.5" 6MP effective/6.4MP Total
- **LENS** 35-105mm f3.1-5.2
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 4-1/1000 sec
- **ISO** Auto, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, 23 scene, movie
- **FLASH** 4m (W)/ 2.5m (T) GN 6.5
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** n/a/ 2.5-inch TFT 115,000 pixels
- **OTHER** xD, 8MB internal, 640x480 15fps movies
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 97 x 55 x 26.5mm/140g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
LCD in low light, start-up speeds

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Some soft images, LCD in bright sunlight

TESTED DECEMBER 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

84%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Olympus Mju Digital 600

Will this suit all levels of user?

The 6MP mju 600 is available in three colours and featuring the trademark weatherproof body equivalent to IEC standard.

FEATURES There's a 3x lens, an impressive collection of 25 scene modes, plus sensitivity of up to ISO 1600 for low light shooting, though image size is sacrificed above ISO 800. The 2.5in LCD incorporates Olympus BrightCapture Technology designed to ensure visibility in dark conditions, which proved very effective. The screen is less impressive in bright conditions.

DESIGN Constructed from durable aluminium, it's lightweight and sits comfortably in the hand. There is no clear area for the thumb, and my fingers occasionally and inadvertently changed the exposure mode.

PERFORMANCE Start-up is a respectable two seconds, and shot cycle time is around a second for 6MP JPEGS taken at optimum quality without flash. The iESP focusing system detects and focuses on the object in the frame and is mostly accurate. Spot AF focuses on the central area, but there is no manual focus.

IMAGE QUALITY Pictures are agreeable; they occasionally lack sharpness and I found camera shake more problematic than normal at telephoto position and in low-light conditions.

VALUE An attractive, well-built point and shooter.

VERDICT While manual features are limited, there's an abundant selection of scene modes, and speed and battery life are good. Very decent. **WDC**

SAMSUNG DIGIMAX L50

£150 Estimated Street Price

RRP £200

- **CCD** 1/2.5" 5MP effect/5.36 Total
- **LENS** 39– 109.2mm f3.2-5.4
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 15– 1/2000 sec
- **ISO** A, 50, 100,200, 400
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, P, 11 scene
- **FLASH** 0.2.5m –2.0m (W) / 0.3-1.5m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** n/a/ 2.5-inch TFT 230,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, 26MB int, 30fps movie with stabilizer
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 93.3 x 52.1 x 22.3mm/120g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
LCD size, lightweight

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Menu is not very user-friendly

TESTED DECEMBER 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	18

84%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Samsung Digimax L50

Samsung's 5MP contender

The point-and-shoot L50 has a lens of 39-102mm equivalent), a slightly shorter range than some rivals. There is no viewfinder; instead the 2.5in LCD, composed of an impressive 230,000 pixels, dominates the back.

FEATURES There are enough features to keep the casual user happy. You can choose from program and automatic exposure modes or 11 scene modes; and the L50 can capture movies at 30fps and 15fps up to 640x480 pixels using MPEG-4 compression, and a movie stabiliser reduces shake. White balance, ISO, exposure compensation and colour channels can be adjusted on screen in manual mode; and multi and spot metering commands are located in the menu. There is a selection of fun in-camera effects, accessible by hitting the 'E' command, including colour filters, image outlines, some (frankly dubious) photo frames and on-screen composition guides.

DESIGN An attractive, lightweight aluminium camera, the L50 sits comfortably in the hand.

PERFORMANCE Start-up is fairly quick; hold down the power button and you can take your first shot in just over 2 secs, and using a Lexar 256MB card we clocked 5MP shot cycle times of around 2.5secs. Using a central focus point, focusing is satisfactory – if not lightning quick – at wide and telephoto positions.

IMAGE QUALITY Macro mode produces decent results, focusing a rather disappointing 10cm from the subject. Noise is evident from ISO 200.

VALUE For the price, this camera is quite good value, as it's a fairly good performer.

VERDICT The L50 is a nice point and shoot, producing pleasing photographs, though ISO 200 is very noisy. However, the abundance of menus means it is not particularly user-friendly. **WDC**

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SRP £499.99

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OLYMPUS SP-320

£160 Estimated Street Price

RRP £230

- **SENSOR** 1/1.8" CCD (7.17x5.32mm), 7MP
- **LENS** 8-24mm (38-114mm) f/2.8-4.9
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 15-1/2000sec/8mins Bulb
- **ISO** Auto, 64-800
- **EXP MODES** Auto, MASP, 25 scene modes, Mov
- **FLASH** 3.8m (W)/2.2m (T) GN approx 7.5
- **VIEWFINDER** Yes
- **MONITOR** 2.5in LCD, 115,000 pixels
- **OTHER** xD, interval shooting over 99 frames, JPEG and RAW
- **POWER** 2xAA
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 99.5 x 65 x 35mm/ 180g

7 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Compact, fully featured, with RAW. Good exposures and colour

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Holding can be awkward; some fringing; resolution lower than the sensor says

TESTED SEPTEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Olympus SP-320

Similar to the SP-350, the 320 still features RAW

If an SLR, or large bridge camera, is too bulky to take with you, you may consider a smaller compact with a full feature set, like the SP-320.

FEATURES Last year's SP-350 had an 8MP sensor; the less-expensive SP-320 offers 7.1 million pixels. The camera has a comprehensive set of exposure modes, and continues its enthusiast heritage with JPEG or RAW recording.

DESIGN Apart from the lack of a hotshoe, there's a resemblance to the SP-350 in design. The LCD is the same size at 2.5in, while the body uses the same materials, button layout and styling. The SP-320 looks traditional, with AA batteries held in the right grip, so is useful for travel.

PERFORMANCE Those used to more-conventional cameras will appreciate the feel and layout of this one. Start-up and shutter release time are quick enough, though the AF occasionally struggles to decide which area to lock onto.

IMAGE QUALITY A big advantage of this camera is the RAW recording, and using Photoshop CS2 at least allows you to adjust some minor fringing. Sharpness can lack bite and this is more noticeable the larger you go. Colour and contrast is very good, and exposures too. I was impressed by the noticeable but well-controlled noise at ISO 800.

VALUE As a backup or lightweight alternative to a DSLR, or as a digital toe-dipper for film buffs, the SP-320 isn't bad value. Performance and features outpace many other cameras in this price bracket.

VERDICT A nice model that offers more than many competitors. **WDC**

ACER CU 6530

£170 Estimated Street Price

RRP £190

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5"CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 6.36MP
- **LENS** 5.8-17.4mm (35-105mm) f/2.8-4.8
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 1/2-1/1000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P +16
- **ISO** Auto, 50-200
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in 230,000 pixel LCD
- **OTHER** Pictbridge, SD, Free dock
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 90 x 54 x 18mm/125g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Plenty of shooting options, slimline build

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Granular images, a bit slow

TESTED JULY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	16

81%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Acer CU 6530

Acer's slimline model has a great spec

Acer is better known for its laptops than its cameras – that may be about to change. The CU6530 is nicely designed and well specified.

FEATURES This is a fully featured compact with 6MP resolution, 640x480 pixel movie shooting and a free recharging/PC connection dock. There are 17 capture modes, plenty of focusing and metering modes, a 2.5inch LCD monitor, live histogram preview, Pict-Bridge printing and a rechargeable lithium-ion battery for extended shooting.

DESIGN The CU6530 is nicely designed although it's not the grippiest of models with its satin sheen finish. Buttons are widely spaced for ease of access but the menu system is a little compli-cated.

PERFORMANCE The Acer's expo-sure system was spot-on on all the shots it took. The focusing is pretty good too, although it failed to focus on a couple of near objects for macro shots. In terms of speed, there are certainly many faster cameras out there.

IMAGE QUALITY Some of the landscape images have an artificial look about them, although there is a 'natural green' setting. On the detail front, images are a touch blocky given the 6MP resolution but re-produce fine at 8x6inches or smaller.

VALUE You cannot argue with a camera that offers the level of spec that the Acer does, and with a free dock thrown in to boot.

VERDICT Acer may not be one of the bigger names in the photo market, but this camera mostly delivers the goods. **WDC**

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EF 28mm f1.8 U	£319.99
EF 28mm f2.8	£139.99
EF 35mm f1.4 L U	£919.99
EF 35mm f2.0	£179.99
NEW EF 50mm f1.2 L USM	£1149.99
EF 50mm f1.4 U	£244.99
EF 50mm f1.8	£74.99
EF 50mm f2.5 Macro	£199.99
EF-S 60mm f2.8 Macro	£279.99
EF 85mm f1.2 L	£1199.99
EF 85mm f1.2 L Mk II	£1449.99
EF 85mm f1.8 U	£269.99
EF 100mm f2.0 USM	£314.99
EF 100mm f2.8 Macro USM	£389.99
EF 135mm f2.0 L U	£719.99
EF 135mm f2.8 SF	£239.99
EF 180mm f3.5 Macro L U	£1019.99
MPE 65mm f2.8	£719.99
TS-E 24mm, 45mm, 90mm	£899.99
EF 200mm f2.8 L U / 2	£519.99
EF 300mm f2.8 L UIS	£3119.99
EF 300mm f4.0 L UIS	£999.99
EF 400mm f2.8 L UIS	£5269.99
EF 400mm f5.6 L	£874.99
EF 400mm f4.0 DO IS USM	£3949.99
EF 500mm f4.0 L UIS	£4399.99
EF 600mm f4.0 L UIS	£5799.99
EF 24-105mm f4 L IS USM	£719.99
EF-S 10-22mm f3.5-4.5 USM	£519.99
EF 16-35mm f2.8 L	£999.99
EF 17-40mm f4 L	£539.99
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EF-S 17-85mm f4-5.6 IS USM	£379.99
EF 20-35mm f3.5-4.5	£294.99
EF 24-70mm f2.8L	£889.99
EF 24-85mm f3.5-4.5 USM	£249.99
EF 28-90mm USM	£89.99
EF 28-105mm f3.5-4.5 U / 2	£189.99
EF 28-135mm f3.5-5.6 UIS	£329.99
EF 28-200mm f3.5-5.6	£269.99
EF 28-200mm f3.5-5.6 USM	£339.99
EF 55-200mm f4.5-5.6 USM II	£149.99
EF 70-200mm f2.8 L UIS	£1299.99
NOW IN EF 70-200mm f4 L IS USM	£899.99
EF 70-200mm f4.0 L	£479.99
EF 80-200mm f4.5-5.6	£99.99
EF 100-300mm f4.5-5.6 U	£249.99
EF 100-400mm f4.5-5.6 UIS	£1079.99
EF 28-300mm f3.5-5.6 L UIS	£1569.99
EF 70-300mm f4-5.6 UIS	£399.99
EF 70-300mm f4.5-5.6 DO IS USM	£839.99
EF 90-300mm f4.5-5.6 USM	£189.99
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EF 2.0x II Extender	£229.99
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Nikon AF Lenses

AF-DX 10.5mm f2.8 G	£494.99
AF-D 50mm f1.4	£219.99
AF-D 50mm f1.8	£99.99
AF-D 14mm f2.8	£1089.99
AF 18mm f2.8	£1169.99
AF-D 20mm f2.8	£489.99
AF-D 24mm f2.8	£349.99
AF-D 28mm f1.4	£1449.99
AF-D 28mm f2.8	£199.99
AF-D 35mm f2	£219.99
AF-D 85mm f1.4 IF	£809.99
AF-D 85mm f1.8	£339.99
AF-D 105mm f2 DC	£789.99
AF-D 135mm f2 DC	£979.99
AF-D 180mm f2.8 IF	£589.99
AF-S 300mm f4 IF ED	£869.99
AF-S VR 300mm f2.8 D	£3249.99
AF-S 400mm f2.8 D	£6199.99
AF-S 500mm f4 IF ED	£5349.99
AF-S 600mm f4 IF ED	£6499.99
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AF-D 60mm f2.8 Micro	£349.99
AF-D 70-180mm ED-Micro	£849.99
AF-D 105mm f2.8 Micro	£599.99
AF-D 200mm f4 ED Micro	£1049.99
AF-S 12-24mm f4 DX	£709.99
AF-S 17-35mm f2.8 D	£1199.99
AF-S 17-55mm f/2.8 DX	£899.99
AF-D 18-35mm f3.5-4.5 IF	£369.99
AF-D 24-50mm f3.5-4.5	£339.99
AF-S 24-85mm f3.5-4.5 G Special	£199.99
AF-S 24-120mm f3.5/5.6 VR	£449.99
AF-S 28-70mm f2.8 D IF	£1189.99
AF-D 28-70mm f3.5-4.5	£249.99
AF-G 28-100mm f3.5-5.6	£79.99
AF-D 28-105mm f3.5-4.5 IF	£309.99
AF-D 28-200mm f3.5-5.6 IF	£249.99
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AF-D 35-105mm f3.5-4.5	£199.99
AF-S 70-200mm f2.8 VR	£1189.99
NEW AF-S VR 70-300mm	£399.99
AF 70-300mm f4.5-5.6 G	£149.99
AF-D 80-400mm f4/5.6 VR	£1049.99
AF-S 200-400mm f4G VR	£4399.99
AF-S DX 18-200mm f3.5-5.6 VR	£549.99
AF-S 105mm f2.8 VR	£599.99
TC-14E II	£329.99
TC-20E II	£279.99
TC-17E	£299.99
SB-600DX	£174.99
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#1 IN WALES

RICOH CAPLIO R30

£170 Estimated Street Price

RRP £220

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 5.13MP
- **LENS** 28-160mm f3.3-4.8
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 8-1/2000 sec
- **ISO** Auto, 64, 100, 200, 400, 800
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, 8 scene modes
- **FLASH** 0.2m - 2.4m (W) 1.14 - 1.85m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** n/a
- **MONITOR** 2.5in TFT LCD
- **OTHER** SD/MMC, 320x240 AVI movie, 28Mb internal
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 95 x 26 x 53mm /135g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
1cm macro. Fast start-up and decent battery life. Versatile zoom

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Zoom function in movie mode loses focus. Noise at low ISO

TESTED MARCH 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	17

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Ricoh Caplio R30

Slim 5MP compact with wideangle 5x optical zoom

Described by Ricoh as a 'more affordable version of the Caplio R3', the R30 offers more than a typical compact at a reasonable price.

FEATURES The R30 includes a 5.7x optical zoom with a 28-160mm focal range – longer and wider angle than most compacts. The R30 also offers a decent maximum ISO of 800. Movie mode captures 640x480 movies at a rate of 30fps.

DESIGN Constructed from plastic with a metal trim, at 26mm deep the Caplio R30 is slim and compact, though not tiny.

PERFORMANCE Ricoh claims the lithium-ion battery can capture an impressive 330 shots from a single charge. I took over 230 pictures with moderate zoom use and the battery still displayed two-thirds capacity. The camera has a fast power-up (1.2sec), and shot cycle-times are under 1 sec for 5MP images at maximum quality. Processing times are equally impressive, the 1cm macro is impressive and you can use the optical zoom, though at telephoto the closest focusing distance is 8cm.

IMAGE QUALITY Pictures produced by the R30 are good, but not outstanding. At low ISO settings, noise is visible in dark areas, and caution is needed with ISO 800.

VALUE The 5MP compact market is crowded, but the R30 is reasonably priced.

VERDICT You quickly appreciate the wide angle and extra focal length of the lens, as well as the camera's quick response and 1cm macro. A good overall package. **WDC**

NIKON COOLPIX S4

£170 Estimated Street Price

RRP £329

- **CCD** 6.4MP (6.0 effective)
- **LENS** 38-380mm (equiv) f/3.5
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 2-1/1000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, 16 scene modes,
- **ISO** 50–400
- **FLASH** 3.0m/10ft
- **MONITOR** 2.5in LCD
- **OTHER** PictBridge, USB 2.0, 13MB int memory, SD cards
- **POWER** 2x Ni-MH AA (supplied) or 2xAA Alk
- **DIMENSIONS** 111.5 x 68.5 x 37mm
- **WEIGHT** 205g (without battery/SD card)

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Size, zoom range, performance, image quality, AA batteries (for some), price

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
No image stabilisation, no manual control, no viewfinder

TESTED SPECIAL 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	19
VALUE Based on RRP	18

88%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Nikon Coolpix S4

Is that a superzoom in your pocket? A compact with a twist

The S4 from Nikon is a swivel-bodied camera with a 10x zoom lens (38-380mm equivalent), that will fit into the back pocket of a pair of jeans.

FEATURES The 6MP camera has a bright 2.5in LCD screen that's fairly visible in sunlight. Though there are no manual modes, the 256-segment metering, linked to the multiple focusing points, produced barely a duff exposure in 200 shots. Face-Priority AF recognises (and focuses on) faces; the D-Lighting option boosts shadow and highlight detail in high-contrast, backlit or indoor flash shots (with varying degrees of success). The S4 has no image stabilisation, but I still managed to get sharp, handheld shots at near-maximum zoom on a damp late October afternoon by being careful.

DESIGN The S4 is a delight to use. It's a tad plasticky, but still feels well-made, and it handles better than you'd expect. Turning the lens on its end so it pokes out of the top, enables easy ground-level and overhead shooting.

PERFORMANCE The S4 is no slouch, especially given its lens. Battery life is more than acceptable too.

IMAGE QUALITY Results are very pleasing, with good colour, tone and detail, and only minor fringing and barrelling in certain circumstances.

VERDICT A cracking little camerathat doesn't compromise on handling, responsiveness or image quality. **WDC**

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Class-leading 28-200mm* wide-angle optical zoom lens, 7.24 million pixel effective resolution, vibration correction function, NEW Ricoh Smooth Imaging Engine II image processing engine and ISO 1600 low-light low-noise capability. The NEW Ricoh Caplio R5 takes bright, sharp, noise-free shots whatever the conditions.* 35mm equivalent. Compact digital cameras less than 150g.

Additional features:

■ Ultra-fast start-up and near-instantaneous shooting ■ 2.8 frames per second continuous shooting capability (limited only by the storage media capacity) ■ 1cm wide macro mode ■ Enhanced Skew Correction function ■ Bright 2.5-inch 230k pixel LCD screen ■ 30 frames per second VGA movie mode with sound ■ Long-life rechargeable battery (approx. 380 shots under CIPA standards)

Caplio R5

..and available at your local independent camera store!

Any of the following authorised **Ricoh** stockists are able to sell you a **Caplio R5** but if you encounter any difficulty please ring **Alpha Digital Services Ltd** on **0118 933 7000**

Aberdeen	Black & Lizars	01224 648608
Abergavenny, Gwent	H. Shackleton & Co	01873 853026
Accrington	Garth Dawson & Co	01254 872969
Alton	Hirecam	01420 542323
Altrincham	Kamera Altrincham Ltd	0161 9277585
Andover	Simmonds Cameras	01264 323012
Ashbourne	Hamiltons Photographic	01335 344343
Ashby	Owen Jones	01530 412735
Axminster	A R Thirkettle	01297 33063
Ayr	Vennal Cameras	01292 6100370
Ballymena NI	R. J. Dick	028 25632348
Bangor NI	John Gauld & Son	028 91271091
Barnstaple	J & A Cameras	0121 3755037
Bath	Ace Cameras	01225 466975
Bath	Avon Film Productions (Bath)	01225 460383
Bath	London Camera Exchange	01225 447622
Bath	Walters of Bath	01225 466599
Bedminster, Bristol	Bernard Hunter	01179 666066
Bedminster, Bristol	The Camera Company	01179 633331
Belfast	A.J.M. Studios	028 90459710
Beverley	Beverley Camera Centre	01482 868243
Bexhill-On-Sea	Bexhill Photographic	01424 212301
Birmingham	King Heath Photo Centre	0121 4411030
Bishop Auckland	Bishop Photo	01388 602400
Bishops Stortford	Photosound Vantage Ltd	01279 651434
Bodmin	Clemens Photography	01208 72850
Bolton	Fotosense Ltd	08702 405470
Bourne	Bourne Photographic	01778 393787
Bournemouth	London Camera Exchange	01202 556549
Bradford	Bradford Camera Exchange	01274 729144
Bridgend	Celtic Cameras	01656 647400
Bridlington	L R Mansley Ltd	01262 675366
Bridport	Pinns Photographic	01308 422027
Brighouse	W B H Lord & Sons Ltd	01484 722462
Bristol	Bristol Cameras	0117 9272610
Bristol	Bristol Cameras	0117 914089
Bristol	Camera Plus	0117 9352079
Bristol	Clifton Cameras	0117 9734484
Bristol	London Camera Exchange	0117 9276185
Bromsgrove	Fotofactory	01527 579172
Brownhills	E E Jones	01543 375606
Burgess Hill	Park Cameras	01444 245316
Burton-on-Trent	Chris Goodhead Photo	01283 561894
Bury St Edmunds	FotoDen Ltd	01284 754098
Buxton	The Photography Shop	01298 71161
Caerphilly	Walters Photo	01685 723419
Cambridge	Campkins Future Vision	01223 368087
Canterbury	Canterbury Cameras	01227 763905
Cardiff	Cameraland Ltd	029 20383170
Cardiff	Cardiff Camera Centre Ltd	029 20394182
Carmarthen	Carmarthen Photo	01267 222300
Castleford	Eric Wiley	01977 553066
Chelmsford	Camera World	01245 255510
Cheltenham	London Camera Exchange	01242 519851
Chesham	Chesham Cameras	01494 783373
Chester	Camera solutions	01244 403540
Chesterfield	London Camera Exchange	01246 211891
Chichester	Sussex Camera Centre	01243 531536
Christchurch	Forest Photo	01202 490399
Cirencester	Concord Foto Centre	01285 643330
Cleethorpes	Comley Cameras	01472 692082
Cleethorpes	Ravenscroft Cameras	01472 342007
Cobham	Cobham Cameras	01932 864273
Colwyn Bay	Cambrian Photography Ltd	01492 532510
Cookstown	Camera +	028 86769026
Coventry	Beryl Houghton Cameras	02476 224639
Cranleigh	Harvey Ide The Camera Shop	01483 272698
Crossgates	Crossgates Camera Centre	0113 2645875
Croyden	High Street Radio Photographic	0208 6889015
Darlington	Darlington Photo Centre	01325 359744
Derby	London Camera Exchange	01332 348644
Dewsbury	Dewsbury Photographic Ctr	01924 463361
Douglas IOM	Morrisons Photos Ltd	01624 629641
Douglas IOM	S.R Keig -Island Photo	01624 673111
Dudley	The Image Store Co Ltd	01384 877006
Dumfries	John Donnelly	01387 254547
Dunstable	Dormans Photo Imaging	01582 665515
Eastbourne	Westmin Photographic	01323 410414
Edinburgh	Camerabase	0131 4529614
Edinburgh	G.D. Young	0131 2296601
Evesham	Chris Warren Photographic	01386 442362
Exeter	London Camera Exchange	01392 279024
Farnborough	Eric D Longworth	01252 541756
Farnham	Farnham Photo & Video	01252 724476
Fareham	London Camera Exchange	01329 236441
Fleet	Fleet Photographic Ltd	01252 617835
Folkestone	Seymour Harrsion	01303 253328
Galashiels	Waverley Studios	01896 752217
Gillingham	Gillingham Photographic	01747 823646
Glasgow	Quiggs of Glasgow	0141 5526823
Gloucester	London Camera Exchange	01452 304513
Gloucester	Phototopic Hi-Tech Ltd	01452 503691
Grantham	Gary Cant Photographic	01476 578075
Guildford	London Camera Exchange	01483 504040
Gwyneold	Nigel Hughes	01766 513612
Hailsham	Camera Centre (Hailsham)	01323 840559
Halesowen	Halesowen Photocentre	0121 5855021
Harlow	A J Purdy & Co Ltd	01279 414556
Harrogate	Bass & Bligh	01423 538138
Hartlepool	Hartlepool Camera Mart Ltd	01429 231113
Hastings	Marriotts Photo Stores	01424 436933
Hawick	D Gaylor & Son	01450 372259
Hereford	Melgray Hi-Tech Ltd	01432 272655
Honiton	Honiton Photographic	01404 43035
Hull	Hilton Photographic	01482 325223
Hyde	Hyde Camera Centre Ltd	0161 3681366
Hythe	Camera Shop Hythe	01303 266706
Ilford	David Leung	0208 299 6657
Ilkley	Annings Ilkley Ltd	01943 607573
Inverness	Ffordes Photographic	01463 783850
Ipswich	Anglia Cameras	01473 258185
Keighley	Cavendish Cameras	01535 602933
Kelso	Hector Innes Photography	01573 224719
Kettering	The Digital Camera Shop	01536 523243
Kidderminster	Kolorkraft Ltd	01562 742866
Kilmarnock	Hector MacDonald & Co	01563 541239
Kinver	The Camera Company (UK)	01384 877006
Lancaster	G L Robertson	01524 67254
Leicester	Youngs of Leicester	0116 2544774
Leeds	Bligh Camera and Optical	0113 2453517
Leeds	Dale Photographic Ltd	0113 2454256
Leeds	The Right Image (Leeds) Ltd	0113 2440113
Lincoln	George Tokarski	01522 5211854
Lincoln	London Camera Exchange	01522 514131
London	Calumet	02073801144
London	Chau Digital	0207 8333938
London	Chiswick Camera Centre	0208 9959114
London	Gales Cameras	0208 504408
London	Ivor Howell	020 86902780
London	Kingsley Photographic	02207 3876500
London	R G Lewis	0207 2422916
London	Richard Caplan	0207 8079990
London	York Cameras Ltd	0207 2427182
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Maidstone	Ronald White	01622 754508
Manchester	London Camera Exchange	0161 236 5819
Merthyr Tydfil	Walters Photo Video Ltd	01685 723419
Middlesborough	RGB Technology Ltd	01642 228182
Minehead	A & B Photo	01643 704473
Narbeth, Pembrokeshire	Celtic Vision	01834 869123
Newcastle Under Lyme	1st Camera Imaging Centre	01782 634580
Newcastle Upon Tyne	D&P Photographic	0191 2130060
Newport, Gwent	G Davies	01633 262738
Newport IOW	Island Photo Centre	01983 525011
Northallerton	Keith Sanderson	01609 774628
Northampton	Skears Photographic	01604 630675
Norwich	Capricorn Cameras	01603 623464
Norwich	London Camera Exchange	01603 612537
Norwich	Warehouse Express. Com	01603 258012
Nottingham	London Camera Exchange	0115 9417486
Oban	Webster of Oban	01631 563794
Okehampton	Okehampton Photo Centre	01837 54055
Orpington	Chas Norman Cameras	01689 871581
Ossett	Ossett Photo Centre	01924 260660
Paignton	London Camera Exchange	01803 553077
Paignton	Paignton Photo Centre	01803 665688
Parkstone	N R Green	01202 744997
Parkstone	Robert White	01202 723046
Penrith	Camera Shop	01768 862216
Pershore	Pershore Camera Centre	01386 553991
Perth	J R S Photo Hardware	01738 633500
Perth	The Camera Shop	01738 441995
Peterborough	Shrives Chemists	01733 554319
Plymouth	London Camera Exchange	01752 664894
Poole	Zoom Photo Print Ltd	01202 683330
Potters Bar	Tally Ho Cameras	0208 4452368
Potters Bar	RK Photographic	01707 643953
Ramsgate	Austin Russell	01843 591626
Reading	London Camera Exchange	0118 9592149
Reading	Station Cameras	0118 9597795
Rochdale	Pennine Photographic	01706 524965
Romford	T & B Photo Ltd	01708 761129
Royston	Royston Photographic	01763 245550
Rushden	Peter Draper	01933 419909
Salisbury	London Camera Exchange	01722 335436
Sandbach	Welsbys Photographic	01270 768435
Seaford	Buckland Photographic	01323 894643
Sheffield	Harrison Cameras	0114 2859855
Sheffield	Sheffield Photo Centre	0114 2667077
Sidmouth	Fotostop at Fords	01395 515763
Skipton	Craven Cameras	01756 796570
Southampton	City Photographic	023 80632709
Southampton	Digital Dimensions Studio Ltd	023 8051423
Southampton	London Camera Exchange	023 80221597
Southampton Civic	London Camera Exchange	023 80331720
Southampton	Photo Solutions	02380 868979
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Southport	Waddington Photographic Ltd	01704534534
Southsea	C T S Portsmouth Ltd	023 92873434
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St Albans	Clarks Camera Centre	01727 852991
St Andrews	Ian Joy Photographic	01334 472264
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St Helier	R.H Lawrence	01534 730123
St Ives	St Ives Camera Company	01736 795276
St Peter Port	Guernsey Photographics	01481 724001
Stoke on Trent	W. Williamson Ltd	01782 313505
Street	Wot A Picture Ltd	01458 447743
Stroud	Peckams of Stroud	01453 764106
Sturminster Newton	Wessex Photographic	01258 472317
Sunderland	Charles Eagles & Son	0191 5679308
Swansea	Camera Centre	01792 476099
Swansea	Colliers Photo Imaging	01792 473831
Swindon	Great Western Cameras	01793 614754
Tavistock	Dartmoor Photographic	01822 615853
Taunton	London Camera Exchange	01823 259955
Totnes	Totnes Photographic	01803 866585
Trowbridge	Clives Cameras	01225 753120
Truro	Geoff Marshall	01736 364407
Ulverston	Photo Express	01229 583050
Wallington	Surrey Cameras	0208 6477600
Walsall	Northcott Photographics	01922 612123
Warminster	David Wiltshire	01985 213376
Warwick	Sid & Jane Cameras	01926 492444
Watford	SRS Microsystems Ltd	01923 226602
Wellington	The Camera Shop	01952 242117
Weybridge	Wey Cameras	01932 842080
Weymouth	Camera Corner	01305 782329
Winchester	London Camera Exchange	01962 866203
Wirral	Toledo Camera Co	0151 6256435
Woking	Harpers Photographic	01483 756601
Wokingham	Wokingham Photographic	0118 9790713
Worcester	London Camera Exchange	01905 22314
Yate, Bristol	Ace Cameras (Bristol)	01454 325302
York	York Camera Mart	01904 642491

And don't forget those all important accessories for your R5....

Soft Case: SC-60

Rechargeable Lithium-Ion Battery: DB-60

AC Adapter: AC-4c

Battery Charger: BJ-6

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RICOH

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CASIO EXILIM EX-Z500

£180 Estimated Street Price

RRP £279

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 5.0MP
- **LENS** 6.2-18.6 (36-114mm equiv) f/2.7-5.2
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 1/8-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Program plus 31 Best shot (scene modes)
- **ISO** Auto, 50-400
- **FLASH** Auto plus 4 modes max range 2.4m
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.7inch digital TFT LCD
- **OTHER** 640x480 @30fps Video, SD
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **DIMENSION/WEIGHT** 88.5 x 57x 20mm/112g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
The Casio has a nice big screen and a simple uncluttered layout

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
The screen's colour doesn't bear relation to the final image

TESTED MARCH 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	16

83%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Casio EX-Z500

Another slimline supermodel from Casio's Exilim range

Casio has been making svelte digicams for ever. This five-megapixel model claims that you can take 500 pictures on a single battery charge.

FEATURES The Casio has a full range of focusing and exposure options and a reasonable ISO range of 50-400, though noise appears as you go up the range. The 3x lens has a reasonably fast maximum aperture (f 2.7) at wideangle but a shake-inducing f 5.2 at the 114mm end. The Best Shot mode features 31 variations on a theme including a different setting for business cards and white boards.

DESIGN Like many of the Exilim range this is an object of desire. There's nothing to frighten the novice, but you have to ferret around in the multiple menus to get access to features that others control with one button.

PERFORMANCE The Z500 turned in a pleasing set of results. Image processing is, by and large, well executed, and despite the fact that the 2.7in LCD's colours bear no relation to the scene or the result, they're nicely rendered, with natural greens. The only downside is when light levels drop and camera shake appears.

IMAGE QUALITY In good lighting, the Casio EX-Z500 will deliver images you can be proud of. Particular caution is required when hand-holding in low light.

VALUE Shop around. At its suggested retail price, the Exilim is a rich boy's toy, but you'll find a street price that's a steal.

VERDICT *This camera is not for those who want to shoot in available light. However, for those who shoot with flash in the dark or in bright sunshine only, this camera is capable of excellent results.* **WDC**

FUJIFILM FINEPIX F10

£180 Estimated Street Price

RRP £299

- **CCD** 6.63 Total 6.3MP effective
- **LENS** 8-24mm (36-108mm equivalent) f/2.8-5
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 3-1/2000sec
- **ISO** 80-1600
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Program, Scene, Mov
- **FLASH** Built-in 4m(W)-6.5m(T)
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** 2.5" 115,000 pixel TFT
- **OTHER** xD
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 92 x 58 x 27.3mm/200g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Big 2.5" LCD, handling, responsiveness, low light performance, battery life

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Little manual control, no RAW, zoom could be bigger

TESTED JUNE 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	17

87%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Fujifilm FinePix F10

Fujifilm calls this its long-life, low-light '24-hour camera'

Fuji says its Real Photo Technology inside the F10 will all but banish four big bugbears: camera shake, poor flash shots, shutter delay and short battery life.

FEATURES The sensor is Fuji's 5th generation SuperCCD HR type, which offers a straight 6.3 MP. Allied to the CCD is a new Real Photo (RP) processor which, Fuji says, harnesses the advanced processing power of the £1500 S3 Pro.

DESIGN The F10 is a squared-off brick of brushed metal. It's big enough to feel comfortable without being cumbersome, and nicely weighted. Controls are kept to a minimum. The back is dominated by a whopping 2.5in LCD screen which is great, but comes at the expense of the viewfinder. Fuji claims that the battery is good for an impressive 500 shots between charges. After 300 shots in my test the indicator still says full.

PERFORMANCE The F10 starts up in 1.3 seconds and makes an immediate impression. The camera is certainly a brisk operator, though not uniquely so. High-Speed Shooting mode effectively turbo-charges the processor to speed up the picture-taking process, albeit at the cost of greater battery consumption (which is why it's user selectable, not permanently on).

IMAGE QUALITY Exposure, white balance and focus rarely erred. In normal conditions, pictures are bright, detailed and nicely toned – but no better than those from some other 6-7MP cameras. Where it scores is in low light. At ISO 800 noise is isn't obtrusive.

VERDICT The F10 is stylish, respon-sive and produces truly excellent images not only in bright light but in dim conditions too. **WDC**

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FUJIFILM FINEPIX F11 ZOOM

£180 Estimated Street Price

RRP £300

- SENSOR 1/1.7" (7.6x5.7mm) CCD, 6.3MP
- LENS 36-108mm f2.8-5.0
- SHUTTER SPEED 3-1/2000 sec
- ISO Auto, 80, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600
- EXPOSURE MODES P, SP, AP, Auto, 5 scene modes
- FLASH 0.3m-6.5m (W)/ 0.3m-4m (T)
- VIEWFINDER n/a
- MONITOR 2.5-inch TFT, 153,000 pixels
- OTHER xD, USB 2.0, 640x480 30fps movies,
- POWER Lithium-ion
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 92 x 58.2 x 27.3mm/155g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Addition of Aperture and Shutter Priority mode enables greater manual control

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Very little to fault, apart from occasional fringing and standard zoom range

TESTED MARCH 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	17

89%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Fujifilm F11 Zoom

Enhanced follow-up to one of Fujifilm's biggest hits

The F11 is the follow-up to the F10, an impressive camera that we named Consumer Compact of 2005.

FEATURES Alongside Program mode (labelled Manual), the F11 has a fully Automatic mode, and Portrait, Natural Light, Landscape, Portrait and Night modes. The Real Photo Technology offers a maximum sensitivity of ISO 1600 for pictures in low light.

DESIGN The F11 is well built and, while compact, not as slim as some models. It's comfortable to hold, with plenty of space for your thumb.

PERFORMANCE The camera is fast. Focusing performance is fine, if slightly slow at telephoto. Selecting High-Speed Shooting will reduce focusing times further, though this consumes more battery life.

IMAGE QUALITY Even at higher sensitivity levels, such as ISO 800, it produces fairly clean, noise-free pictures. Skin tones and colours are accurate, though in high-contrast scenes, pictures can be a bit over-exposed with evidence of purple fringing.

VALUE With an SRP under £300, the F11 is good value considering the build and features on offer.

VERDICT Fujifilm has made what was a super compact camera even better. With the FinePix F11 you get good performance, advanced low-light shooting and manual control, in an attractive package. **WDC**

NIKON COOLPIX P2

£180 Estimated Street Price

RRP £280

- CCD 1/1.8" RGB Primary Colour CCD, 5.1 Million Effective Pixels, 2592x1944 pixels maximum
- LENS 36 - 126mm f/2.7 - f/5.2
- SHUTTER SPEED 8 sec - 1/2000sec
- ISO Auto, 64, 100, 200, 400
- EXPOSURE MODES Auto, P, AP 16 Scene modes
- FLASH GN 11
- VIEWFINDER/MONITOR None/2.5-inch colour LCD
- OTHER SD/MMC, 16Mb internal, WiFi
- POWER EN-EL8 Li-ion battery
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 91 x 60 x 39mm/185g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Metering, AF, exposure control, range of shooting features, Nikon 'help' system

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: No optical viewfinder, no storage card supplied

TESTED JANUARY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	18

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Nikon P2

Set up a network with the WiFi-enabled P2

It has to be said that the P2 looks pretty standard as an example of the latest high-tech gadgetry. Though it has traditional looks, the P2 is replete with WiFi capability. The camera has 16 scene modes, plus 11 advanced scene modes that enable you to fine tune the settings. Backing that up is an Aperture Priority mode providing 10-step manual aperture control. Nikon's D-Lighting system allows further image tuning in-camera post capture, adjusting for excessive backlighting or low-powered flash exposures. One of the very neat features (also part of the Scene modes) is the Portrait 'Face AF' system that, when selected, can automatically recognise and track even a moving face, keeping it in focus. The camera provides an easy-to-use control layout.

The mode dial allows you to switch through the P2's main shooting and set-up options including ISO control. On the back of the camera, the obvious omission is an optical viewfinder. Thankfully, a compositional grid and an active histogram display make up for it, although frustratingly, you cannot display them together.

Using WiFi you can shoot and transfer images directly to a connected PC or printer, within a 30m range, depending on the location. However, I found that setting up and using the P2's WiFi system after installing the software was less than straightforward.

VERDICT The P2 offers comprehensive yet easy-to-use features, matched with innovative WiFi technology and image quality that is more than adequate. **WDC**

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- 10 Million Pixels
- 6x Optical Zoom
- Optical Image Stabiliser
- Face Detection Feature
- 2.5" LCD
- To 1600 ISO

Pennine price

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PANASONIC LUMIX LZ5

£180 Estimated Street Price

RRP £250

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29m) 6MP
- **LENS** 6.1-36.6mm (37-222mm) f/2.8-4.5
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 60-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, Sc, Mov
- **ISO** Auto, 80-400 (boost 800-1600)
- **FLASH** 4.2m GN
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5" LCD
- **OTHER** SD, high viewpoint LCD
- **POWER** 2 xAA
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 100 x 62 x 45mm/ 200g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
The lens and OIS still adds value

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Image noise, and the grainy screen can be off-putting

TESTED JUNE 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	17

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Panasonic LZ5

Another in the impressive LZ series

When this series was launched, I was impressed by the lens, the OIS and the price. A year on, the competition is following; does the LZ5 still stand up?

FEATURES The LZ5 ups the pixels to 6million. It still has a 6x zoom with Mega OIS, and Program and scene modes. It now offers a new LCD with high viewing mode in which the crystals shift from 90° to a 45° downward tilt for over-the-crowd shots.

DESIGN The camera is practically identical to the older cameras, with a fatter form than most in its class. This allows space for the lens, and gives a comfortable grip. It's small enough to fit in a coat pocket, yet still provides space for your fingers and thumbs.

It's nice to have the high angle mode, but it's unlikely to be used much by most people. Plus there's a trade-off to the resolution of the screen: it's a bit like viewing the world through a very fine mesh, making it quite tricky to view detail in images, which can be annoying.

IMAGE QUALITY Noise is a problem – even ISO 80 displays luminance noise and, by ISO 400, shadow noise is quite intrusive. Exposure and colour is very good, though, but the sharpening can at times be a little over-eager.

VALUE For the price, the LZ5 still offers something unusual, especially the great 6x zoom, and the image stabilisation is still a great feature.

VERDICT Image quality is not bad, and fine for snapshots, but picky shooters may be disappointed by larger prints. **WDC**

KODAK EASYSHARE Z650

£190 Estimated Street Price

RRP £230

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76 x 4.29mm), 6MP effective
- **LENS** Schneider Kreuznach Variogon f2.8-3.7 (38-380mm 35mm equivalent)
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 1/8 - 1/1700sec
- **EXP MODES** Auto, PASM, 17 scene modes
- **ISO** Auto 80-160, 80, 100, 200, 400, 800
- **FLASH** Auto plus four modes
- **VIEWFINDER** EVF, 201,000 pixels
- **MONITOR** 2.0in, 110,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, USB 2.0, PictBridge
- **POWER** NiMH
- **DIMENSIONS** 97.8 x 77.5 x 72.6mm/287g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
The Z650's solid lens is great. It's user-friendly too, with easy-to-access features

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Quality degrades during close-up and maximum zoom, plus clunky operation

TESTED AUGUST 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	17

83%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Kodak EasyShare Z650

A new 10x entry to Kodak's superzoom Z series

The budget Z650 sits at the top of Kodak's Z series of superzoom cameras.

FEATURES The Z650's headline feature is of course its 10x optical zoom, providing f2.8-3.7 (38-380mm equivalent) optics. The lens is complemented by a two-inch LCD and electronic viewfinder, while a pop-up flash, 17 scene modes and PASM manual controls offer users the capacity to yield enhanced creative control when shooting.

DESIGN While it may not offer the pocket-sized convenience of a compact, a rubber handgrip and sturdy build offset the weight and size of the lens. Control layout is excellent, providing clear, on-body access to most commonly called for commands.

PERFORMANCE Meandering to life in about two seconds, its write times are equally leisurely, leaving frustrating delays during blink-and-you'll-miss-it photo opportunities. Operation is clunky, extending to the far-from-simultaneous electronic viewfinder. Despite this, the Z650 offers a commendable imaging performance.

IMAGE QUALITY Fine detail is sharp and well defined, and this clarity is enhanced further by bright, punchy exposures. Noise is well controlled, but some purple fringing is noticeable, along with a slight tendency to overexpose.

VALUE A few jagged operational edges belie its budget heritage, but the fact that it can be found online for less than £200 means it can be easily forgiven.

VERDICT Despite a lack of panache both inside and out, the Z650 offers some impressive specs. **WDC**

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MP-E 65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro	£719.00	EF 28-105mm f/3.5-4.5 II USM	£189.00
EF 85mm f/1.2L USM	£1,199.00	EF 28-105mm f/4-5.6 USM	£154.00
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EF 100mm f/2.0	£314.00	EF 28-300mm f/3.5-5.6L IS USM	£1569.00
EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro USM	£389.00	EF 55-200mm f/4.5-5.6 II USM	£119.99
EF 135mm f/2.0L USM	£719.00	EF 70-200mm f/2.8 L IS USM	£1,299.00
EF 135mm f/2.8	£234.00	EF 70-200mm f/4L USM	£479.00
EF 180mm f/3.5L USM Macro	£1019.00	EF 70-200mm f/4L IS USM NEW	£Phone
EF 200mm f/2.8L USM	£522.00	EF 70-300mm f/4.0-5.6 IS USM	£389.00
EF 300mm f/2.8L USM IS	£3,119.00	EF 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 DO IS USM	£839.00
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AF-D 28mm f/1.4	£1,409.00	AF-S 500mm f/4 IF-ED II Black	£5,249.00	AF-S 28-70mm f/2.8D IF ED	£1,149.00	TC-17E II (1.7x Conv. for AF-S lenses)	£319.00
AF-D 50mm f/1.8	£85.00	AF-S 600mm f/4 IF-ED II Black	£6,499.00	AF-D 28-105mm f/3.5-4.5 IF	£309.99	TC-20E II (2x Conv. for AF-S lenses)	£299.00
AF-D 60mm f/2.8 Micro	£319.00	AF-S 12-24mm f/4G DX IF ED	£719.00	AF-G 28-200mm f/3.5-5.6 IF ED Silver	£189.99	Please ask in store, visit our website or call us on **0845 050 1060** for bundle pricing with filters	
AF-D 85mm f/2.8 Micro	£1,239.00	AF-S 17-55mm f/2.8G IF-ED DX	£899.00	AF-S 55-200mm f/4-5.6 DX	£159.00		
AF-D 85mm f/1.8	£339.00	AF-D 18-35mm f/3.5-4.5	£384.99	AF-D 70-180mm f/4.5-5.6 ED Micro	£850.00		

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HP PHOTOSMART R818

£190 Estimated Street Price

RRP £270

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 5.13MP
- **LENS** 5.8-29mm (36-180mm equiv) f/2.8-4.7
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 15-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** M,A,S,P +11 scene
- **ISO** Auto, 50-400
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2inch, 153,600 pixel LCD
- **OTHER** 640x480 @30fps Video, SD
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 93 x 57 x 30mm/190g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Build, features, sensible control balance between buttons and menus

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Not much not to like except that the camera is a little bit slow in operation

TESTED MARCH 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	17

86%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

HP Photosmart R818

HP's R818 comes under scrutiny

HP's latest model is the 5x zooming, five-megapixel R818. It follows HP's utilitarian design brief with a charcoal curvy-edged design.

FEATURES There's a full range of the usual prosumer exposure modes (manual, aperture and shutter priority, and manual), plus macro, super macro and infinity focusing. There are a couple of focus area modes and exposure metering pattern choices too. Movies are shot at 640x480 pixels at 30fps and there are plenty of scene modes.

DESIGN By eschewing the option of putting the biggest possible LCD on the camera, there's a little more room to include buttons for the most commonly accessed features, and the screen itself is one of the brighter ones on the market.

PERFORMANCE The only real negative about the R818 is that it seems a little slow in start-up, whether for recording or playback. The zoom is a bit noisy in action but moves swiftly enough, while the camera quickly establishes focus and takes a picture. I was very impressed with the R818's control of noise, and its colours are lifelike and vivid where required.

IMAGE QUALITY The macro and supermacro shots show good detail, while there isn't too much distortion on shots at infinity. Image processing quality is good.

VALUE Given the spec, it's well-priced.

VERDICT This is a no-nonsense camera that delivers excellent results with a minimum of fuss and in an easy-to-use way. There isn't really anything more that you could ask for. **WDC**

CANON POWERSHOT A700

£200 Estimated Street Price

RRP £250

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 6MP
- **LENS** 35-210mm f/2.8-4.8
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 15-1/2000 sec
- **ISO** Auto, 80-800
- **EXP MODES** Auto, MASP, 14 Scene, Mov
- **FLASH** 55cm-3.5m (W)/2.5m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** Yes, optical
- **MONITOR** 2.5in LCD, 115,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, 2fps continuous shooting to card capacity
- **POWER** 2xAA
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 94.5 x 66.5 x 43.4mm/200g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Handling, images, lens, viewfinder, manual control, good ISO range

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
No RAW, low-resolution LCD, no image stabilisation, slow to use

TESTED AUGUST 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	19

89%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Canon PowerShot A700

Canon's new PowerShot in the popular A series

The A series of Canons has proved popular for both beginners and more-experienced users.

FEATURES Manual, Aperture and Shutter priority modes are included. The 6x zoom lens offers the 35mm equivalent of 35-210mm. We don't have IS (image stabilisation) in the A-series yet, but I predict we'll see it next year. The A700 also boasts a raft of digital features in its menu: there's a colour option including rarities like positive film to replicate slide film, and skin lighten or darken options. Unfortunately there's no RAW facility, so JPEG will have to suffice.

DESIGN The A700 has a conventional look, a weighty, meaty feel and nice big 2.5in screen, though its resolution is lower than I'd like. Even better than that is an optical viewfinder.

PERFORMANCE The camera takes a couple of seconds to start up. The AF, using Canon's multi-zoned system, is split-second speedy, and there's almost no shutter lag. Similarly the zoom is quick, though uses a stepped system so you're limited to some degree. It's not a real problem, though.

IMAGE QUALITY Exposures can be a little erratic depending on the subject. Colour is punchy, and with crisp contrast and sharpness. Noise is well controlled too, especially at the lower end, but even ISO 800 is certainly not offensive.

VALUE For the amount of features, the lens and final image quality, the A700 is a good proposition.

VERDICT I like this camera. What it lacks in style, it more than makes up for in quality. **WDC**

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BENQ DC X600

£200 Estimated Street Price

RRP £200

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29mm), 6.0MP
- **LENS** 6.2-18.6mm (37.5-112.5mm equiv) f/2.7&5.2
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 4-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Program plus 10 scene
- **ISO** Auto, 64-800
- **FLASH** Auto plus 4 modes, max range 2.7m
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5inch, 232,000 pixel LCD
- **OTHER** 640x480 @30fps Video, SD
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 85.5 x 53.5 x 19mm/100g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
The DC X600 has a wide specification including magnified centre focusing

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
The five-way controller is too sensitive, so it's easy to press a wrong button

TESTED MARCH 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	15
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	15
VALUE Based on RRP	17

81%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

BenQ DC X600

How good is BenQ's well-specified 6MP offering?

BenQ releases digital cameras with broad specifications, the well-specified six-megapixel, 3x zoom DC X600 included.

FEATURES There are five focus settings: autofocus, macro focus, infinity focus, pan focus and manual focus. The focus points are selectable within a central area of the frame, or a spot focus point.

DESIGN The LCD occupies most of the back of the camera with just a five-way controller and four other buttons adjacent. Its 3x Pentax lens is a bit noisy in action, while the five-way controller is slightly fiddly to use.

PERFORMANCE The focusing system is certainly sophisticated and performs well, if slowly. The zoom isn't too sensitive: if you press too long on the zoom control then whoosh, you're at full tele; too soft and you click on one step and no further. The final image quality was a disappointment given the 6MP resolution.

IMAGE QUALITY The final image quality of the BenQ falls disappointingly short. OK, I wasn't blessed with the brightest sunshine during my test period, but nonetheless the images are a definite let down, from a perspective of sharpness and noise.

VALUE Thanks to its solid construction and specification, you can't argue with the price.

VERDICT This is, in many ways, a very good camera. It's just a bit of a shame that its performance in the field cannot match its handbook's promise. **WDC**

CANON IXUS 55

£200 Estimated Street Price

RRP £299

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5inch CCD (Total 5.3MP, Effective 5.0P)
- **LENS** 35-105mm f/2.8-4.9
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 15-1/1500sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** 2 Auto plus 9 scene
- **ISO** Auto, 50-400
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes
- **VIEWFINDER** Optical
- **MONITOR** 2.5inch 115,000 pixel TFT
- **OTHER** 640x480 30fps Video, SD
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 86 x 53.5 x 21.5mm/140g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Spec, handling, speed of operation

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Noisy images, focus did not always work, sharpness

TESTED FEBRUARY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	15
VALUE Based on RRP	17

83%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Canon IXUS 55

Minor update to the popular IXUS 50

It's easy to lose track of the different Digital IXUS models after a while. This £299 model falls into the 5MP, 3x zoom portable jewellery category.

FEATURES The Canon IXUS 55 has a shiny, well-designed exterior. Its 2592x1944 pixel images are complemented by a 3x optical zoom covering the range 35-105mm (35mm equivalent). Shutter speeds of 15-1/1500sec, three metering patterns and a sophisticated focusing system offer plenty of choice to experienced users.

DESIGN All controls are positive in action and, given their wide spacing, easy to find.

PERFORMANCE The IXUS 55 is fairly swift in its actions, although a bit sluggish on flash recharge. Focusing and exposure are accurate, and while performance in the field is nothing to write home about, it is nothing to complain about either.

IMAGE QUALITY I remember testing a 3MP IXUS III and being impressed by how much it got out of its 3MP in detail and image quality. This 5MP model does not manage the same trick, sadly. Results are not bad, but some of its images lack the clarity of the other 5MP Canon models.

VALUE There seems to be almost a £100 difference between highest and lowest street price on this model. At its lower, near-£200 price point, this is excellent value. At the higher end, ie if you pay full SRP, the value proposition is much less compelling.

VERDICT Another attractive and competent if not spectacularly performing model from the ever-expanding IXUS range. **WDC**

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FUJIFILM FINEPIX V10

£200 Estimated Street Price

RRP £250

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" (5.75x4.29mm) 5.1MP Super CCD
- **LENS** 6.3-21.6mm (36-130mm) f/2.8-5.5
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 4-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Program AE, 6 Sc, Mov
- **ISO** Auto, 64-1600
- **FLASH** Built-in 0.3-4.4m
- **VIEWFINDER** No
- **MONITOR** 3in TFT 230,000 pixels
- **OTHER** USB 2.0, games, JPEG, xD
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 83 x 63.5 x 23mm/155g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Good sensitivity range up to ISO 1600; compact and attractive looks

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Fiddly buttons and controls; overprocessed images; AF performance

TESTED MAY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	15
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	14
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	15

77%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Fujifilm FinePix V10

Small and attractive with a 3inch LCD and games

The Finepix V10 has a few special features that set it apart from the crowd.

FEATURES All Fujifilm's cameras now use the company's Super CCD, with the octagonal pixels. The pixels work together with the Real Photo Processor to provide extended sensitivity up to ISO 1600. The higher speed means the camera can be used in lower light conditions. There's also a 3in LCD taking up most of the back; a bright mode enables viewing in bright sun. Another innovation is that Fujifilm has added arcade-style games, which can be used with the pictures on your card.

DESIGN The camera is small, square, attractive and easily pocketable. However, the controls on the back are small and fiddly, running along the bottom of the large screen.

PERFORMANCE The AF is quite slow and misses the mark several times, especially in low light. It also has a fair degree of shutter lag, which is disappointing when wanting to shoot quickly.

IMAGE QUALITY Aside from focus issues, images are okay. Higher ISOs produce noisy images, but not as bad as those from competitors. At lower sensitivity images look slightly overprocessed and suffer from a seemingly over-eager JPEG compression.

VALUE There are better cameras at this price. If the low-light capability appeals, even Fujifilm has better models, and a mobile phone has better games.

VERDICT An interesting experiment, but the screen and design trade-off is a step too far. The games are fun, but a gimmick. **WDC**

FUJIFILM FINEPIX Z3

£200 Estimated Street Price

RRP £200

- **SENSOR** 5.1MP 1/2.5in Super CCD HR
- **LENS** 36-108mm equivalent, f/3.5-4.2
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 4-1/1000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Programmed AE, Movie
- **ISO** Auto, 64, 100, 200, 400, 800, 1600
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in 230,000 pixel LCD
- **OTHER** xD, internal memory 10MB
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/ WEIGHT** 90 x 55 x 20mm/ 130g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Good looks, high ISO

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Price, low-light AF is disappointing

TESTED NOVEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	17

84%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Fujifilm FinePix Z3

Lifestyle camera gets serious when the light goes down

The latest in the lifestyle category from Fujifilm is the Z3, available in three colours – pink, blue and silver.

FEATURES With a 5MP Super CCD, the camera also boasts a top ISO speed of 1600 for low-light photography, making this Fujifilm's party camera. This is reinforced with a flash system designed to balance background and foreground for enhanced skin tones. The camera can also take two consecutive images – one with and one without flash – allowing users to choose.

DESIGN I had the pink one, which the ladies found attractive, though in bars and clubs, the artificial lighting just made it look silver. It's attractive, with a sliding lens cover, 2.5inch LCD and easy operation.

PERFORMANCE Using the flash slows the camera down, a common problem with compacts. However, in other ways it's speedy, from powering up to recording.

IMAGE QUALITY Generally image quality is good for a compact, though I had a few blurred flash shots as the AF struggled to cope in a dark nightclub. The noise is well controlled at ISO 1600, thanks to the same system as that on the Fuji F30.

VALUE At the RRP, it is slightly expensive, but it has a reasonable feature set and is well made. Lifestyle cameras always command a slight premium, but street prices of about £180 are more realistic.

VERDICT There are many lifestyle cameras, but the Z3 definitely has pulling power among the ladies. **WDC**

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PENTAX OPTIO W10

£200 Estimated Street Price

RRP £269

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.7 x 4.29mm) 6.0MP
- **LENS** 6.3-18.9mm (38-114mm equiv), f3.3-4
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 4sec-1/2000sec
- **ISO** Auto, 64-800
- **EXP MODES** Program, Green, 18 scene modes
- **FLASH** Built-in, auto plus four modes
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in TFT, 115,000 pixels
- **OTHER** PictBridge, DPOF, SD
- **POWER** Li-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 107 x 54.5 x 23mm, 140g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Convenient and stylish design, durable, weatherproof and dust-proof

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Images are wishy-washy, some aspects of performance are sluggish

TESTED SEPTEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	15
VALUE Based on RRP	15

78%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Pentax Optio W10

Can this W series camera from Pentax make a splash?

The W10, a member of Pentax's waterproof digicam range, sports a smattering of fresh features including Pentax's Face Recognition AF.

FEATURES The 6MP camera's standout feature is waterproof functionality without the need for a waterproof case. In line with JIS class 8 waterproof performance, the WP can withstand 30 minutes of use at 1.5 metres deep.

DESIGN Smooth and slim, the W10 slips comfortably into a pocket. The 2.5in LCD screen does not dominate the rear panel, leaving ample space for a simple collection of controls that include a multifunctional pad and menu and playback buttons.

PERFORMANCE Startup isn't very fast, but write and shutter times are both prompt. Shot-to-shot speeds can drag, though. The user interface gives access to options like white balance at a touch of a button.

IMAGE QUALITY The camera can take clean and precise images in bright and fine conditions, but ghosting is common in high-contrast scenes, while most photos lack definition and punch.

VALUE A suggested retail price of £269 represents fair value for the spec and brand name. But the poor images mean that, away from underwater shooting, there are many more-superior cameras in this price bracket.

VERDICT Offering weather and waterproof functionality, Pentax has produced a durable model. However, a sluggish performance and lacklustre images makes the W10 a one-trick pony. **WDC**

OLYMPUS MJU 700

£200 Estimated Street Price

RRP £280

- **SENSOR** 1/2.3" CCD 6MP
- **LENS** 6.5-19.5mm (37-111mm equivalent) f/3.4-5.7
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 1/2-1/1000sec
- **ISO** 64-1600
- **EXP MODES** Program, 23 scene modes, Mov
- **FLASH** GN: 7
- **VIEWFINDER** No
- **MONITOR** 2.5in BrightCapture
- **OTHER** xD, iESP AF, ESP and spot meter
- **POWER** Li-ion cell
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 94.8 x 55.9 x 20.4mm/103g

7 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Design, ISO range, weatherproofing, different colours available

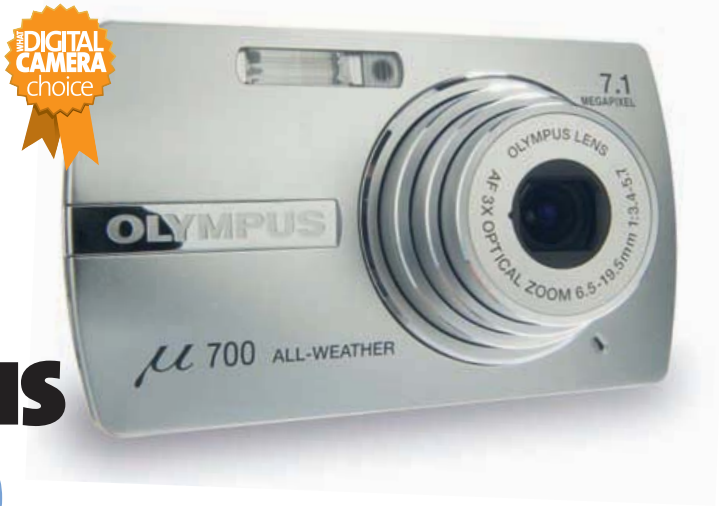
WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: No optical viewfinder, noise at higher ISO settings

TESTED AUGUST 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com



Olympus Mju 700

Another belter from the highly regarded mju range

Olympus Mju Digital cameras have always maintained good design, weatherproofing and ease of use. The Mju 700's no exception.

FEATURES The Mju's weatherproofing means that it is ideal for beach or skiing holidays. This model has a 3in 7.1MP CCD coupled with Olympus's True Pic Turbo processor. Images are fed to an xD card, and I recommend the Hi-speed (coded H) version. The 2.5in LCD features BrightCapture technology for better viewing in low light, and there's a nice wide ISO range. Olympus also claims a digital image stabilisation mode, but this merely ups the camera sensitivity to allow the faster shutter speeds needed in low light.

DESIGN With a metal front plate, the camera is let down somewhat by the plastic shell around the back. Nevertheless the camera feels solid and robust. The sleek design is enhanced by a wedge-shaped profile.

PERFORMANCE The camera isn't a bad performer, with a reasonably quick AF and minimal shutter lag. However, beware using it in extreme low light because the camera might have a high ISO but the autofocus struggles in near darkness.

IMAGE QUALITY Exposures are very good, with vibrant colours. The high ISO is useful, though noise is obvious, while 'digital image stabilisation' is heading into murky territory.

VALUE The Mju is more expensive than similar models but not overly so. Shop around is the best advice.

VERDICT Though not without its faults, the Mju 700 is at the better end of the 7MP market. **WDC**

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KODAK EASYSHARE V570

£210 Estimated Street Price

RRP £270

- **SENSOR** Dual 5MP CCD
- **LENSES** 23mm f2.8, 39-117mm f3.9-4.4
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 1/8-1/14000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, macro, 20 Scene
- **ISO** Auto, 64-160
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes, GN 6.3
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in 210,000pixel LCD
- **OTHER** 640x480 @30fps Video, SD
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 101 x 49 x 20mm/ 125g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
The V570 has a very flexible optical system and a nice look and feel

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
The limited ISO range of 64-160 does not always manage to combat noise

TESTED MARCH 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	19
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	17

86%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Kodak V570

Kodak's unique twin-lens digicam is a speedy beast

Kodak's V570 combines a zoom lens (39-117mm) with a proper wideangle lens of 23mm.
FEATURES The V570 has a 5MP chip, delivering a maximum image size of 2576x1936 pixels. There's a movie mode that produces 640x480 pixel movies at 30 frames per second, and 20 scene modes to complement the fully auto, landscape and macro modes. The camera uses an SD card and 32MB internal memory.
DESIGN The Kodak is a delightful camera from both an aesthetic and a tactile point of view. The black and silver livery as well as the reassuringly solid feel add to the sense of quality. The 2.5 inch monitor is quick and responsive, as is the zooming of the lens and the focusing system.

PERFORMANCE The Kodak is a speedy beast: its burst mode lets you shoot four full-resolution shots in about two seconds. This camera can be guilty of lacking sensitivity and of image degradation at higher ISOs.
VALUE, It is rare to get zooms starting at 23 or 24mm. The extra grabbing power that this lens gives you makes the V570 something of an anomaly.
IMAGE QUALITY The Kodak V570 could, technically, have better noise control and it would benefit from having the option of a faster top-end ISO to reduce camera shake, but its results are still good enough for most users, including me.
VERDICT This is an attractive camera from several viewpoints and provides beautiful images as well. WDC

PANASONIC LUMIX FX01

£210 Estimated Street Price

RRP £249

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" (5.76x4.29mm) CCD, 6.0MP
- **LENS** 28-102mm f/2.8-5.6
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 8-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Program, 16 Sc, Mov
- **ISO** Auto, 80, 100, 200, 400, HIGH (800-1600)
- **FLASH** 0.6m-4m (Wide)
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in TFT, 207,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD/MMC, Optical Image Stabiliser, Widescreen 30fps movie mode
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 94 x 51 x 24mm/153g (with card and battery)

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Build; speed of use; bright LCD; wideangle lens; image stabiliser; ISO 100 images

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Image quality at ISO 400; lack of manual exposure controls; small buttons

TESTED MAY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	19
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	17

89%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Panasonic FX01

The world's smallest 28mm-equipped digital compact

The FX01 looks similar to its award-winning predecessors, but with worthwhile new features.
FEATURES The most useful is the Leica lens, which has been extended to 28-102mm, a jump from 3x to 3.6x, but it now has a useful wideangle. Also new is a High Sensitivity mode and a 16:9 widescreen movie mode. Headline features include the 2.5in LCD, Optical Image Stabiliser, and 6MP CCD.
DESIGN In their design, finish and build quality, Panasonic's compacts have few equals. Despite the large LCD the FX01 doesn't suffer from the nowhere-to-rest-your-thumb syndrome.
PERFORMANCE The FX01 maintains the range's reputation for very fast focusing and minimal shutter lag. Images clear the buffer quickly, even in continuous mode. The LCD is not only big but bright, sharp, and quick to refresh. The ace is that 28mm wideangle lens.
IMAGE QUALITY In good light, images are sharp, detailed, and there's barely any vignetting or fringing. Exposures are mostly perfect, colour is excellent and the auto white balance needs fine-tuning only in low tungsten light, when pictures can go a bit orange.
VALUE For this build quality, with a 6MP sensor, 28mm wideangle Leica lens and an image stabiliser, this camera is pretty good value.
VERDICT A gorgeous camera to look at and use. The results are good, except in low light, where its noisy sensor makes its presence known at the higher ISOs. WDC

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PANASONIC LUMIX DMC-FX9

£220 Estimated Street Price

RRP £350

6 mega pixels

- **CCD** 1/2.5" 6MP effective/6.37MP total
- **LENS** 35-105mm f2.8-5.0
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 8- 1/2000 sec
- **ISO** Auto, 80, 100, 200, 400
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, P, 14 scene
- **FLASH** 0.3m – 4m (W) 0.3-2.2 (T)
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** None/ 2.5-inch TFT 207,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, 30fps movie
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 94.1 x 50.5 x 24.2mm/155g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
LCD, anti-shake

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Limited space around back

TESTED DECEMBER 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

86%

View this camera 360°
www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Panasonic DMC-FX9

An update to an old favourite

The FX8 has been replaced by the DMC-FX9 and the main difference is the 6MP resolution instead of 5MP.

FEATURES Additionally the resolution of the 2.5in LCD has been increased from 150,000 to 207,000 pixels. The LCD is a joy, providing a bright, very clear view, making it easy to compose a photograph.

DESIGN The FX9 looks similar to its predecessor, the FX8, with a smooth metal finish.

PERFORMANCE Performance times are impressive: there is little evidence of shutter lag and start-up is under 1.5secs. In 6MP mode you can zoom up to 3x optically; the Extra Optical Zoom feature enables you to extend this to 4x if you are happy to shoot 3MP images. To reduce the effect of blur in low-light conditions the FX9 has a useful optical image stabiliser with two modes: Mode 1 functions continually and Mode 2 is activated when the shutter is depressed. Five selectable autofocus modes include 5-area, 3-area (high speed), 1-area and spot. Adjustments can be made to white balance, exposure compensation and sensitivity; and a slow shutter can be enabled, although there is no control over the aperture.

IMAGE QUALITY Images are good, with strong colours, though fringing occurs in high-contrast situations and noise is evident at ISO 200, even more so at ISO 400.

VALUE This is a marked improvement over the FX8, and the image quality makes it good value.

VERDICT
This is a fast compact, with an enhanced LCD, and produces good-quality photos and movies. **WDC**

CANON IXUS 60

£220 Estimated Street Price

RRP £300

6 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 6MP
- **LENS** 5.8-17.4mm (35-105mm) f/2.8-4.9
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 15-1/1500 sec
- **ISO** Auto, 80-800
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, Sc, Mov
- **FLASH** GN 3.5-5m
- **VIEWFINDER** Opt
- **MONITOR** 2.5in LCD, 173,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 86 x 54 x 22mm/150g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Design and build, image quality

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Cost, some image fall-off at the corners, lack of control

TESTED JUNE 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	17

88%

View this camera 360°
www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Canon IXUS 60

An IXUS with a big LCD *and* a viewfinder

The IXUS range seems to be renewed as often as the fashion designers launch new collections. The Canon Digital IXUS 60 has six megapixels and a 3x zoom.

FEATURES Canon has added a larger screen at 2.5in and, impressively, the small model still manages to incorporate a viewfinder, so shooting in bright sun is still a viable option. Other manufacturers take note: if Canon can, why can't you?

DESIGN The small form factor means smaller buttons on the back, which can be fiddly, but there's still enough space to curl the hand around the camera and not accidentally press any buttons.

HANDLING The camera is lovely to use. The shutter is responsive, the LCD bright, and the menu system fairly easy to navigate, with a quick function set for the most-accessed functions, and a deep menu system for other features.

IMAGE QUALITY Despite the small sensor, the camera produces good results. The exposure and colour is spot on, though saturation is slightly more natural than many compacts, which tend to warm images up. Similarly, sharpening is kept on the right side of enhanced. There's little sign of fringing and image noise is pretty well controlled. At 35mm, sharpness falls off at the image corners a bit.

VALUE Canon IXUS cameras are expensive, and at £300 this is no exception. It has an appealing style and gives almost faultless performance, so you do get what you pay for.

VERDICT Good results and easy to use, but there's a premium for the Canon IXUS moniker. **WDC**

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CASIO EXILIM EX-S600

£220 Estimated Street Price

RRP £280

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5in CCD(5.75 x 4.29mm) 6MP
- **LENS** 38-114mm f2.7-5.2
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 4-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, 32 scene modes
- **ISO** Auto, 50, 100, 200, 400
- **FLASH** 0.4-2.8m (W)/ 0.4-1.4m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in TFT, 84,960 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, USB 2.0, 8.3MB internal memory
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **SIZE/ WEIGHT** 90 x 59 x 16.1mm/115g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Compact dimensions and build quality

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Some commands hidden in menus. Disappointing macro

TESTED APRIL 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

83%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Casio EX-S600

Thin EXILIM bursting with scene modes

Measuring a mere 13.7mm, the EX-S600 includes a 6MP CCD capable of producing 14x11in 200dpi prints.

FEATURES The S600 boasts 34 BESTSHOT modes. Of these, 'Splashing Water' speeds up the shutter, and 'High Sensitivity' can attain ISO 1600 at full resolution. Anti-shake DSP reduces blurred images.

DESIGN Using a one-button/one function approach, the buttons are a little small, though there is plenty of space for your thumb. Manual features are adjustable through the menu. It would be quicker and easier to assign them to a button. The metal exterior is durable.

PERFORMANCE After an impressive sub-1.30sec startup, cycle times are a disappointing five seconds for 6MP best quality images (with focus lock). Using nine points, multi auto focusing is effective if not particularly quick. Macro mode focuses 15cm from the subject, taking several attempts to lock focus. Despite a low resolution, the 2.5in LCD is twice as bright as previous models and copes fairly well.

IMAGE QUALITY Home users won't be disappointed: pictures are generally well exposed with strong colours, though highlights can be burnt out and noise is very evident at ISO 400 in shadows.

VALUE Competitively priced, but if you want control over shutter or aperture, there are alternatives.

VERDICT This will suit anyone looking for an attractive compact, who isn't bothered about fast performance or manual control. **WDC**

FUJIFILM FINEPIX S5600

£220 Estimated Street Price

RRP £280

- **SENSOR** 5.1MP
- **LENS** 38-380mm f/3.2-3.5
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 15-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, + 18 scene, ±2EV
- **ISO** Auto, 64-400
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 3 modes
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** EVF/ 2in LCD
- **OTHER** 640x480 15fps Video, xD plus 13.5MB internal memory
- **POWER** 4xAA
- **DIMENSIONS/ WEIGHT** 88 x 60 x 36.5mm/150g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Image quality, handling

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
No RAW mode, oversharpening, no stabilisation

TESTED SPECIAL 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	18

86%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Fujifilm S5600

This superzoom compact has a 10x zoom

The 5MP S5600 is nicely specified, though strangely, sports mode is called 'anti-blur' mode.

FEATURES There's a shutter speed of 15-1/2000sec, a 10x zoom, and a range of focusing and metering modes and overrides to cover all situations.

DESIGN The S5600 tries to provide a one-button-one-function experience as far as possible. The drive and exposure compensation buttons are just rear of the shutter release, which sits on a chunky and tactile grip. On the left of the top-plate is a lockable AF/MF button, while on the back are buttons including LCD brightness and the finepix button which gives access to three oft-used functions of ISO, resolution and chroma (colour saturation). Handling the camera, thanks to its well-thought-out ergonomics, is a doddle.

PERFORMANCE Exposures are spot-on, focusing is generally responsive and processing pretty speedy. There might be a bit of oversharpening but you can change the standard setting to soft.

IMAGE QUALITY Colours are vivid without being unnatural and the defocused elements of images are nicely rendered. There's no RAW mode so the images you'll get as JPEGs is as good as you're going to get. Fortunately, that is really rather good.

VALUE The S5600 handles very well, and its images are very nice. Great value.

VERDICT The 5600's performance and ease of use has almost won me over. The only thing missing is a real anti-blurring mode to stabilise the 380mm maximum focal length. **WDC**

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SONY CYBERSHOT W70

£220 Estimated Street Price

RRP £250

- SENSOR 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29m) 7MP
- LENS 6.3-18.9mm (38-114mm) f/2.8-5.6
- SHUTTER SPEED 1-1/2000sec
- ISO Auto, 100-1000
- EXPOSURE MODES Program, Auto, Sc, Mov
- FLASH GN 4m
- VIEWFINDER Yes
- MONITOR 2.5in LCD 115,000 pixels
- OTHER MS Duo Pro
- POWER Li-Ion with charger
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 89 x 57 x 23mm/157g

7 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Style, ISO range, handling, viewfinder

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Some noise at high ISO, little bit bland

TESTED SEPTEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

85%

View this camera 360°
www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Sony W70

Lifestyle compact boasting ISO 1000

Sony has a variety of lifestyle-type compacts, such as the T-series. But the W-series cameras offer a little more control.

FEATURES With a 7.2MP sensor, the W70's main selling point to those in the know is it's maximum ISO 1000 top sensitivity setting. The W70 boasts a 3x zoom lens, equivalent to 38-114mm in 35mm terms. It has a limited number of manual controls but, like most compacts, relies more heavily on auto and scene functions.

DESIGN It's a good-looking model, with a nice large 2.5inch screen and an optical viewfinder, a rarity among the compact lifestyle cameras. The menu system has a groovy animated main menu which models the position of the mode dial, and is impressively slick and user friendly.

PERFORMANCE Boasting a nice quick start-up time, with a pleasant jingle, the Sony W70 has fast autofocus and little shutter lag. It pretty much takes pictures instantaneously, which is always good from a compact camera.

IMAGE QUALITY For general photography, the W70 does a good job, and the extended ISO range shows how far we've moved on since last year. It may not match Fujifilm's output, but it ain't half bad mum!

VALUE The sleek metal body, combined with a better-than-average feature set, makes the W70 a surprisingly good-value option, especially if you consider the good ISO range.

VERDICT The Sony Cyber-Shot W70 is a good-looking and easy-to-use camera, that still manages to incorporate some very decent features. **WDC**

RICOH CAPLIO R4

£230 Estimated Street Price

RRP £250

- SENSOR 1/2.5" (5.75x4.29mm) 6.04MP eff
- LENS 4.6-33mm (28-200 equiv) f/3.3-4.8
- SHUTTER SPEEDS 1/30-1/2000sec
- EXPOSURE MODES Program AE, 6 Sc, Mov
- ISO Auto, 64-800
- FLASH Built-in
- VIEWFINDER No
- MONITOR 2.5in LCD, 153,000 pixels
- OTHER SD, Image Stabilisation, USB
- POWER Li-Ion
- SIZE/WEIGHT 95 x 26 x 53mm/135g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Price; 28-200mm lens useful; image stabilisation; macro mode; build

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
No optical viewfinder; some fringing; noise at higher ISOs

TESTED MAY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	19

88%

View this camera 360°
www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Ricoh R4

The nippy R4 sports a giant zoom lens

Ricoh has carved a niche for itself by offering something a bit different.

FEATURES The standout feature is the 7.1x optical lens which equates to 28-200mm. This is supported with image stabilisation via a moving CCD. It also has a 6MP 1/2.5in CCD, along with a 2.5in LCD with 150,000 pixels. Ricoh claims a longer battery life, up to 330 shots between recharging, although this depends on how often you use the flash or LCD.

DESIGN The full metal jacket shows this is one of Ricoh's more illustrious models. On the downside there's no optical viewfinder, always a victim of ever-increasing screen sizes. The back of the camera has a sensible button layout and easily placed controls. The top-plate has the power, shutter release and image stabiliser controls.

PERFORMANCE Startup is fast, shutter delay is short and everything is where it should be. It lacks the manual control of some of its rivals, but has nice touches such as timed exposures up to eight seconds.

IMAGE QUALITY Image noise up to ISO 200 is more than acceptable; at ISO 400 it is more obvious and by ISO 800 intrusive, but better than earlier models.

VALUE For a 6MP camera with a long zoom, high sensitivity and image stabilisation, all in a metal shell, there's little to moan about.

VERDICT A nice camera that performs well, offers something different and doesn't hit the pocket too hard. **WDC**

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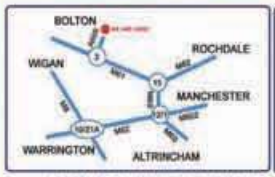

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SAMSUNG DIGIMAX L85

£230 Estimated Street Price

RRP £300

8 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 1/1.8" CCD (7.2x5.3mm) 8.13MP
- **LENS** 7.8-39mm (38-190mm) f/2.8-4.4
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 15-1/2000sec
- **ISO** Auto 50-400
- **EXPOSURE MODES** M,A,S,P, 11Sc, Mov, ±2EV
- **FLASH** 0.2m-3m Wide, 0.5-2.5m Tele
- **VIEWFINDER** No
- **MONITOR** 2.5" LCD, 230,000 pixels
- **OTHER** HDMI, SD
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 109.2 x 64 x 29mm/ 190g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Good-looking camera, well made, feature packed

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Fringing, lack of detail, some silly features, quirky menus

TESTED JULY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	15
VALUE Based on RRP	16

84%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Samsung Digimax L85

Retro-styled compact from the Korean electronics giant

Samsung's compact range includes the L85, which is a real eye-catcher.

FEATURES This 8MP model is being marketed as the world's first to feature HDMI: that is, compatibility with High Definition TVs and equipment. A casual glance would imply it is therefore a HD camera, but it's not. The L85 includes a HDMI cradle which allows the camera to be attached to a HD TV. Other spec includes the 2.5in LCD and the 5x zoom.

DESIGN The L85 has traditional yet classy looks. The matt rubberised grip is tactile and secure while the larger-than-average camera is comfortable and secure to hold.

PERFORMANCE I decry the lack of a viewfinder, particularly as 8MP sensors are prone to more camera shake, especially with a longer zoom. The large screen is a bonus though, and is clear in most circumstances but suffers in bright light. The camera layout is generally efficient and the main menu system is clear and concise.

IMAGE QUALITY Most of the images are well exposed and punchy. Close inspection shows several faults though, including lack of detail in subjects such as brickwork and grass, and some fringing in high-contrast scenes. These faults reinforce the results we've seen with other 8MP cameras. Stick to 5 or 6MP.

VALUE The L85 is a nice camera, once you get used to some quirks, and it has some interesting features.

VERDICT This is a lovely camera to look at and handle, but ultimately is let down by the sensor. **WDC**

CANON IXUS 65

£240 Estimated Street Price

RRP £240

6 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 6MP
- **LENS** 5.8-17.4mm (35-105mm) f/2.8-4.9
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 15-1/1500 sec
- **ISO** Auto, 80-800
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, Sc, Mov
- **FLASH** GN 3.5-5m
- **VIEWFINDER** No
- **MONITOR** 3in LCD, 173,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 90 x 57 x 20mm/175g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Sexy design, big LCD, nice handling

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Iffy low-light AF focusing and slightly warm flash

TESTED SEPTEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	19
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

86%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Canon IXUS 65

Big LCD and a 3x zoom

Canon has withdrawn most of its sport sponsorship and is moving into the fashion arena; its advertising now looks like a perfume advert, and the IXUS range is at the forefont of its strategy.

FEATURES This 6MP model offers little in the way of radical features: it's got a 3x zoom, program-based modes and little to worry the newcomer to digital photography. Among the scene modes is a Kids and Pets mode, so the camera is clearly intended for family use, as well as for the fashion junkie.

DESIGN The Canon Digital IXUS 65 is a gorgeous piece of electronic jewellery, with a milled criss-cross motif around the lens, and a 'Samurai' swoop motif on the top plate. The backplate boasts a 3in LCD screen – Canon's biggest yet – which is reasonably sharp.

PERFORMANCE There's little to criticise the IXUS for – it's responsive and, for general snapshots, performs as well as the best of them.

IMAGE QUALITY Don't expect miracles – this isn't an SLR with RAW features; but it is a solid point-and-shooter, with warm colours and good sharpness, if held steadily. However, there is a danger of camera shake, especially in low light.

VALUE IXUS cameras don't come cheap, but then they're a desirable fashion brand, with quality design and materials. This is a camera for the label junkie – which isn't a bad thing, it just costs more.

VERDICT The young and the restless will love this camera; it's stylish and fun and draws attention at parties. **WDC**

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FUJIFILM FINEPIX F30

£240 Estimated Street Price

RRP £280

- **SENSOR** 6.3MP, 1/1.7" SuperCCD HR
- **LENS** 36-108mm (equivalent) f/2.8-5.0
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 3sec-1/2000sec
- **ISO** Auto, 100-3200
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, A, S, Scene, Anti-Blur
- **FLASH** 60cm-6.5m (wideangle)
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in, 230,000 pixel LCD
- **OTHER** 640x480 30fps movies, spotmeter
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell (1800mAh - 580 shots)
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 93 x 57 x 28mm/ 195g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Great results up to ISO 1600; fast; robust body

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Boring styling; unremarkable lens range; no viewfinder

TESTED SEPTEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	19
VALUE Based on RRP	18

88%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Fujifilm FinePix F30

ISO 3200 on a compact? You'd better believe it, baby

Pixel counts are passé in the compact arena now. Low-light shooting is the new battleground, with Image Stabilisation and high ISO options.

FEATURES The F30's ability to shoot, handheld, with no flash, in lower light than any other compact, is its unique selling point and, to be honest, its only distinguishing feature. Everything else is pretty run of the mill: 6 megapixels, 3x zoom (36-108mm equivalent), 2.5" screen.

DESIGN Fuji has made some pretty stylish cameras in the past, but has become very conservative of late. The F30 isn't ugly, but neither does it have anything to distinguish it.

PERFORMANCE There's almost nothing negative that can be said about the F30's performance. A bright, clear LCD, negligible shutter lag, a continuous mode that saves the first or last three shots in a sequence, and class-leading battery life. Sure, there's no full manual control or RAW mode, but this is a point-and-shoot camera.

IMAGE QUALITY On sunny days the results are good, but no better than those from many other cameras. But with the F30 the quality stays good up to ISO 800. At ISO 1600 it breaks down a bit but is still okay. At ISO 3200 it's pretty ropey, but no worse than ISO 3200 film, and still quite usable.

VALUE If you look at the basic specs it may not seem good value, but what value would you place on the ability to deliver good-quality shots in low light?

VERDICT The F30's appeal is as a pocket snapshooter for keen photographers but lacks visual pizzazz. **WDC**

NIKON COOLPIX S5

£240 Estimated Street Price

RRP £299

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" (5.76x4.29mm) CCD, 6.18MP
- **LENS** 5.8-17.4mm (35-105mm) f/3.0-5.4
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 2-1/500sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, four subject modes, 11 scene modes, Mov
- **ISO** Auto, 50, 100, 200, 400
- **FLASH** 0.3m-2.6m (W)/ 0.3m-1.4m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in TFT, 230,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD/MMC, 21MB Internal, USB, 640x480 30fps movies
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 93 x 59 x 20mm/135g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Attractive design; range of overrides; DLighting and Face Priority

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Prone to camera shake; barrel distortion at wideangle; sluggish performance

TESTED MAY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Nikon S5

Second of Nikon's super-slim compact digicams

The Nikon Coolpix S5 is a 6MP 3x zoom that differs from the S6 in price, lack of wireless connectivity and a 2.5inch rather than 3inch LCD.

FEATURES It does, however, have the DLighting in-camera exposure improvement system, the exposure sophistication of a much heavier model, and the Pictmotion 'make your own video slideshow' system. There's the one-touch portrait mode selection with face-priority focusing. There's also a range of scene modes and four subject modes.

DESIGN The Coolpix S5 is bordering on skinny. The top-plate controls are tiny but surprisingly usable. The big issue is where to put your fingers.

PERFORMANCE Focusing is good on stationary items, albeit a bit slothful if there is some movement. The exposures are, by and large, excellent. Colours are strong and saturated when required, soft and muted where appropriate. It does suffer from fringing, but image processing was rarely overdone and, while the S5 is not meant to be a sports camera, there is still a bit too much of a pause for my liking between shots.

IMAGE QUALITY The DLighting does add a bit of pep to duller images but the incidence of images affected by camera shake is a bit worrying. Where images were good they were lovely, with splendid colours and detail.

VALUE The Nikon S5 is competing with some excellent cameras. It's a well-built model that looks good, so for many people that would make it good value.

VERDICT A tad lacking in substance, but above average for its class. **WDC**

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SONY CYBERSHOT DSC-T9

£240 Estimated Street Price

RRP £330

- SENSOR 1/2.5in CCD (5.75 x 4.29mm) 6.0MP
- LENS 6.33-19mm (38-114mm equiv) f/3.5-4.3
- SHUTTER SPEED 1-1/1000sec
- ISO Auto, 80-400
- EXPOSURE MODES Auto, P +10 scene
- FLASH Built-in, Auto plus 3 modes
- VIEWFINDER None
- MONITOR 2.5in 230,600 pixel LCD
- OTHER 640x480 @30fps Video, MS Duo PRO
- POWER Lilon cell
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 90 x 55 x 20.5mm/160g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Fuss free build and usage, excellent AF and exposures

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: The slide-down door could be easily be activated accidentally in a pocket

TESTED APRIL 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

83%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Sony Cybershot T9

Slender, hard-bodied stunner is a veritable pocket rocket

Slim is the only description that fits the narrow dimensions of this attractive Cybershot.

FEATURES Like many of its forebears, the T9 features a hologram focusing aid. Exposures are flexible as long as you don't select full auto mode.

DESIGN Is perhaps the be-all and end-all of the T range of Cybershots, which is a shame, as I found the sliding front door on/off switch to be a little easy to turn to the on position, especially when stored in a pocket. The design is a little busier on the back as you do need some controls even for a sophisticated point and shooter like this one.

PERFORMANCE The focusing system is sure-footed and delivers accurate results. It is perhaps a little on the slothful side, and it isn't always clear where the near focus limit is, so time can be wasted in shooting close subjects. The image stabiliser works, to a limit, and I found it oddly more worthwhile when shooting very long exposures (over 1/2 second) than when trying to capture outdoor scenes at, say, 1/15sec.

IMAGE QUALITY The T9 delivered all that you would expect from a 6MP model. Colours are vivid in good light, although benefiting from a burst of flash for colour oomph in low light.

VALUE There's usually a premium for cameras bearing the Sony label, and this is at the pricier end of the 6MP spectrum in point-and-shoot models.

VERDICT This does what it is supposed to very well and its results make it one to consider. WDC

CANON IXUS WIRELESS

£250 Estimated Street Price

RRP £390

- SENSOR 1/2.5in CCD (5.75 x 4.29mm), 5.0MP
- LENS 5.8-17.4mm (35-105mm equiv) f/2.8-4.9
- SHUTTER SPEEDS 15-1/1500sec
- EXPOSURE MODES P +10 scene
- ISO Auto, 50-400
- FLASH Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes
- VIEWFINDER Optical, real-image zoom finder
- MONITOR 2in 118,000 pixel LCD
- OTHER 640x480 @30fps Video, SD, WiFi
- POWER Li-Ion cell
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 99 x 54.5 x 21.5mm/130g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Speedy wireless printing. Reliable performance and handling

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Wireless file downloading only works with wireless-equipped XP computers

TESTED APRIL 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	16

83%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Canon IXUS Wireless

The new Canon IXUS is (partially) wireless

Wireless means you don't need to carry lots of cables around, in principle a good thing.

FEATURES This IXUS has a range of auto modes, 640x480 pixel 30fps movie capture and a 15-1/1500sec shutter speed range. There's the usual flexible focusing and exposure options, a range of white balance settings, flash modes and a 2fps continuous shooting option. The camera can send files to a wireless equipped PC running Windows XP with Service Pack 2. The camera comes with a wireless print adaptor that lets you print to PictBridge-equipped Pixma and Selphy printers.

DESIGN Design and IXUS are virtually synonymous, but I'm not wild about silver on silver printing.

PERFORMANCE You pretty much know what you're going to get from an IXUS; and the Wireless didn't disappoint.

IMAGE QUALITY In bright sunshine the IXUS Wireless performed very well. As light levels dropped, so did the overall quality. Pictures are sharp enough.

VALUE Letting the camera work as a wireless NAS (network attached server) storage device may make more sense than merely adding connectivity for one type of operating system. I think the camera is a bit pricey for users not owning a Canon printer that is running XP/SP2 computers.

VERDICT You can't help but wonder whether this is a solution looking for a problem. Nice enough camera, forget the wireless stuff though. WDC

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FUJIFILM FINEPIX E900

£250 Estimated Street Price

RRP £280

- **SENSOR** 1/1.6" CCD (Total 9.24MP, Effective 9MP)
- **LENS** 32-128mm f/2.8-5.6
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 15-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** M, A, S, P, + Auto and 4 scene, ±2EV
- **ISO** Auto, 80-800
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 3 modes
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** OPT/ 2in 115,000 pixels
- **OTHER** 640x480-pixel 30fps Video, xD
- **POWER** 2x AA cells
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 102 x 63 x 34.5mm/200g

9 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Fantastic spec, great user control

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: 9MP results not much better than 5MP

TESTED JANUARY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Fujifilm Finepix E900

The 9MP Finepix E900

This compact model boasts 9MP, delivering an image of 3488x2616 pixels, which should be enough to print an image of 17x8in.

FEATURES Equally impressive is the E900's shutter speeds – from 15-1/2000sec – and there's a 2" screen, 64-zone TTL metering as well as a selection of focus and drive modes. Manual exposure and manual focus are available, plus lots of automatic exposure modes. There's an optical viewfinder, macro focusing down to 7.5cm, and exposure compensation.

DESIGN The E900's controls are generally a one-button, one-control type, although there are two rather more involved menu driver systems. The first is the straight menu accesses functions you will probably only want to change a couple of times a month. The second is the finepix button which gives access to ISO setting, saturation and, of course, resolution and compression. RAW mode is hidden away from the resolution settings in the Menu section.

PERFORMANCE The camera is quick to switch on and, if you're in the right shooting mode, nippy between shots – though a 9MP RAW file takes about six seconds to write to disk.

IMAGE QUALITY Images were, given the excellent resolution and spec, a bit disappointing. While exposures were excellent, in January light many images were subject to camera shake, and the extra possibilities offered by 9MP RAW image capture were often wasted by camera movement at the slowish shutter speeds it delivered.

VERDICT On paper, this is an awesome camera for the price. I'm not sure that the 9MP files produce images anywhere near twice as good as a 5MP model would, though. **WDC**

NIKON COOLPIX P3

£250 Estimated Street Price

RRP £350

- **SENSOR** 1/1.8" CCD (7.176x5.319mm) 8.34MP
- **LENS** 36-126mm f/2.7-5.3
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 8-1/2000sec
- **ISO** Auto, 50-400
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, Aperture Priority, Auto, 16 Scene, Mov
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in, 150,000 pixel LCD
- **OTHER** Wireless printing and file transfer, SD
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 92 x 61 x 31mm/170g

8 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Chunky and easy to hold, well-exposed and well-focused results

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Unnecessary Wifi feature

TESTED JUNE 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

84%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Nikon Coolpix P3

The P3 has 8 megapixels and Wi-fi too

There is more to the Coolpix P3 than just having Wi-Fi connectivity to printers and PCs.

FEATURES It also has an 8.1MP sensor and a 3.5x zoom covering a 36-126mm focal length range. It has an automatic 11-point AF system or a selectable one-of-99 AF point mode and spot AF mode. There's also the excellent 256 segment Nikon matrix metering, along with centreweighted, central Spot and AF Spot metering possibilities. It even has 26Mb of internal storage. There's a 4x digital zoom and, of course, Wi-Fi connectivity.

DESIGN The Coolpix feels a slim item in the hand but is that bit thicker than many other available cameras. Its few buttons are multifunctional, by and large.

PERFORMANCE The P3 is not the fastest camera in the world but exposures are lovely. For part of the test the weather wasn't great, but the P3 made the most of what it had.

IMAGE QUALITY The gripes about 8MP images (they break down when their resolution should make them better) notwithstanding, the P3 produced a beautifully saturated set of images in our test. Edge detail was surprisingly good on bright subjects, but tailed off rapidly as contrast levels fell.

VALUE Strip out the Wireless aspect of the P3 and it's a great camera. Unless you really, really want WiFi access, you'll be paying a premium for this model.

VERDICT This is a lovely little camera that's been hijacked by the latest trend accessory. I have yet to be convinced as to the merits of non-wired camera connection. **WDC**

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NIKON COOLPIX S6

£250 Estimated Street Price

RRP £350

6 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" (5.76x4.29mm) CCD 6MP
- **LENS** 5.8-17.4mm (35-105mm) f/3-5.4
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 2-1/500sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, 4 Subject, 11Sc, Mov
- **ISO** Auto 50-400
- **FLASH** 0.3-2.6m W/0.3-1.4m T
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 3in LCD
- **OTHER** SD, Wi-Fi
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/ WEIGHT** 100.5 x 60 x 21mm/ 140g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Nice design, WiFi, AF

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Screen hard to see in bright light, limited control, pricey

TESTED JUNE 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

86%

View this camera 360°
www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Nikon Coolpix S6

This features Wifi and a three-inch LCD

Bearing more than a passing resemblance to the Nikon S5 (p110), this model is Wi-Fi equipped to hook straight into your home network.

FEATURES The Wi-FI is designed for home networks rather than the internet, letting you move away from a mess of wires. The 3in LCD adds to the size but leaves no room for a viewfinder. The exposure system is typical of a compact – Program AE, scene modes and exposure compensation.

DESIGN The shell of the camera is tactile with a smooth finish and easy holding. Despite the size of the LCD there's still room for your thumb. The controls are well placed and I love the iPod-like scroll wheel.

PERFORMANCE Relying on the LCD to compose, causes problems in bright sun. But the camera is easy to use and the AF quick, especially with the face-recognition mode. The Muvee Pictmotion feature is fun. The Wi-Fi set-up is easy, and PictBridge produced good prints.

IMAGE QUALITY I have few complaints. Images have good colour, though a little muted, and good exposures. The disappointing ISO 400 top speed produces just enough noise in the shadows to be noticeable, but it's not horrendous.

VALUE The camera is at the upper limit in terms of what it offers per pound, but stylish cameras always cost more, especially with WiFi.

VERDICT Nikon has produced a pretty performer with features that appeal to the more tech-savvy user rather than the photographer. **WDC**

OLYMPUS MJU 720 SW

£250 Estimated Street Price

RRP £279

7 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 1/2.3"CCD (7.17x5.32mm) 7.4MP
- **LENS** 6.7-20.1mm (38-114mm) f/3.4-5.7
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 4-1/1000sec
- **ISO** Auto, 64-400 (+ 800, 1600)
- **EXP MODES** P, 24 Scene, Mov
- **FLASH** 3.8m (W)/2.8m (T) GN approx 6.8
- **VIEWFINDER** No
- **MONITOR** 2.5in LCD, 115,000 pixels
- **OTHER** xD, waterproof and shockproof
- **POWER** Li-ion cell
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 91 x 58.7 x 19.8mm/149g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Great looks; good results in good light; incredibly solid; pretty nippy to boot

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
Couple of handling issues in terms of button usage

TESTED OCTOBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	18

86%

View this camera 360°
www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Olympus Mju 720SW

The hardest camera in the playground

Olympus has seen fit to encase its latest compact model in a shell so abuse-proof, it refers to the mju 720SW as the Olympus mju 'tough'.

FEATURES The camera is shockproof to the extent it can be dropped 1.5m onto a variety of surfaces. The 720 SW is also waterproof to 3m. Inside the body, there's a 7.4MP sensor plus a movie mode of 640x480 pixels but only at 15fps.

DESIGN There's no doubting the feel of invincibility of the 720 SW, but the buttons, tough as they are, are not necessarily any easier to use.

PERFORMANCE With the exception of a slightly disappointing minimum focusing distance, there is nothing really to criticise the 720 SW for. It does what it does pretty well. In exposure terms, the Olympus produced a lovely bright set of results; decent enough to justify the camera as a picture taker alone without its supercharged tough body.

IMAGE QUALITY Exposures are largely accurate and there is a lovely soft gradation to natural colours.

VALUE Confidence is not a priceless commodity, but it's certainly a valuable one. Depending on how often you or your (formerly) loved ones have a habit of dropping your digital cameras, this might well be the best £300 you ever spend.

VERDICT There are very few cameras you'd feel confident about giving to a child on the beach to take pictures with and return it unharmed. This is definitely one of them. **WDC**

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OLYMPUS MJU 750

£250 Estimated Street Price

RRP £300

7 mega pixels

- SENSOR 7.1MP effective, 1/2.33" CCD
- LENS 6.4-32mm (36-180mm) f/3.3-5
- SHUTTER SPEEDS 4-1/2000sec
- EXPOSURE MODES P, 23 Sc, Mov
- ISO Auto, 80-1600
- FLASH 3.8 (W) 2.7M(T)
- VIEWFINDER None
- MONITOR 2.5in LCD, 215,000 pixels LCD
- OTHER xD, weatherproof, Image Stabiliser
- POWER Li-Ion cell
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 96 x 54 x 24.3mm/ 120g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: All-weather protection, stabilisation, ISO range

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Shadow noise, Auto ISO not always accurate

TESTED DECEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

84%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Olympus Mju 750

Image-stabilised compact that's also bijou

Olympus announced two very similar models in the Mju 740 and 750. This, the more-interesting one, has mechanical image stabilisation.

FEATURES Besides image stabilisation, the Mju 750 also has Olympus Bright Capture technology, with a top ISO speed of 1600, getting the best of both worlds in low light. Bright Capture also increases the brightness of the LCD in low light.

DESIGN Like other Mjus, the 750 features an all-weather casing. The wedge-shaped design is easy to hold, and the new design of the four-way controller on the back is attractive and not fiddly for those with oversized digits.

PERFORMANCE This is a simple compact to use, with the usual array of scene modes and program AE, so don't expect masses of control. However, the Bright Capture technology works well enough in dark places, making this an ideal party camera.

IMAGE QUALITY In general, image quality is more than acceptable, although there is some concern about shadow noise, even at the lowest sensitivity of ISO 80. Incidentally, in low light the auto ISO still remains at ISO 80, so thank heavens for the image stabilisation.

VALUE Street prices are better than the RRP, and not many lifestyle cameras can offer the same level of protection or zoom range as this can.

VERDICT This Olympus maintains the Mju's reputation as a convenient, easy-to-use compact that looks nice too. **WDC**

OLYMPUS MJU 810

£250 Estimated Street Price

RRP £330

8 mega pixels

- SENSOR 1/1.8" (7.176 x 5.319mm), 8.3MP
- LENS 7.4-22.2mm (35-105mm equiv) f2.8-4.7
- SHUTTER SPEEDS 4 - 1/1000sec
- EXPOSURE MODES Program setting plus 20 scene modes, Mov
- ISO Auto 64-3200
- FLASH Auto plus 3 modes, max range 5.2m
- VIEWFINDER None
- MONITOR 2.5inch, 230,000 pixel LCD
- OTHER 640x480 @ 30 fps video, xD
- POWER Li-Ion cell
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 97 x 56 x 22.7mm/ 145g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Compact, well-designed, image quality in everyday conditions, weatherproof

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Low-light and close-up image quality

TESTED MAY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	19
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	15

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Olympus Mju 810

We test drive this 8MP offering from Olympus

Small but perfectly formed, this arrival from Olympus is, at first glance, everything we have come to expect. It combines a 3x optical zoom, a 2.5in LCD and a range of home-grown technologies.

FEATURES Like any self-respecting compact the 810 offers a healthy clutch of exposure modes. A twist comes with Olympus's BrightCapture Technology. This increases the camera's sensitivity to enable more accurately exposed night-time shots while brightening the LCD.

DESIGN The camera's matte, all-metal casing is resistant to water spray from any direction. A good size D-pad and mode dial are the main components of the camera's rear, and they take care of most of the key functions.

PERFORMANCE A nippy performer that springs to life with a delay of about a second. Focusing is similarly sure-footed, and at the lens's widest setting the 810 locks almost instantaneously. A single focusing mode and just two metering options mean there is limited flexibility for creative shooting.

IMAGE QUALITY In bright conditions, images are sharp, accurate and shine with a bright, full-bodied spectrum. In low-light images often display edge softening and more noise. At the extremes of the lens's focal range, quality dips.

VALUE Thanks to an impressive build quality and a high standard of production, it manages to represent fair value for money.

VERDICT Olympus has brought together appealing aspects of its mju range to create a high-resolution quality compact. **WDC**

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580 EX Speedlite £299.99

NEW!!

Sony Alpha A100 Digital SLR

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Our Low Body Only Price
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+ DT 18-200mm f3.5-6.3 Zoom Lens
See Website

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EF 17-40mm f/4.0L USM	£533.00
EF-S 17-55mm f/2.8 IS USM	See Web
EF-S 17-85mm f/4.0-5.6 IS U	£369.00
EF-S 18-55mm f3.5-f5.6	£65.00
EF 24-70mm f/2.8L USM	£881.00
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EF 28-135mm f/3.5-5.6 U IS	£328.00
EF 28-200mm f/3.5-5.6 USM	£339.00
EF 28-300mm f/3.5-5.6L U IS	£1569.00
EF 55-200mm f/4.5-5.6 II U	£129.99
EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS USM	£1,295.00
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SRP £349.99
OUR Price
£276.00

• Nikon Lenses •

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AF-S 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6G ED DX	£265.00
AF-S 18-200mm f/3.5-5.6 VR	See Web
AF 24-85mm f/2.8-4D IF	£425.00
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AF-S 28-70mm f/2.8D IF ED	£1,099.00
AF 28-105mm f/3.5-4.5 D IF	£299.99
AF 28-200mm f/3.5-5.6G ED S	£185.00
AF-S 55-200mm f/4-5.6 DX	£149.00
AF 70-180mm f/4.5-5.6D ED	£840.00
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AF-S 70-200mm f/2.8G VR	£1183.00
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AF 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6D VR	£999.00
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SRP £299.99
OUR Price
£165.00

• Tamron Lenses •

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AF 11-18mm f/4.5-5.6 Di-II	£379.99
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SRP £129.99
OUR Price
£99.00

• Sigma Lenses •

available in Canon/ Nikon fit

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PANASONIC LUMIX DMC-FZ7

£250 Estimated Street Price

RRP £349

6 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5in CCD (5.75 x 4.29mm) 6MP
- **LENSES** F/2.8-3.3 (35mm equ 36-432mm)
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 60-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, P, A, S, M, 16 scene modes
- **ISO** Auto, 80-400, (High Sens 800, 1600)
- **FLASH** 0.3m-6m (W) 0.3m-5.4m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** Electronic, 114,000 pixels
- **MONITOR** 2.5in LCD, 114,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD/MMC, 16:9 30fps movie 16:9 JPEG
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 112.5 x 72.2 x 79mm/ 310g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Versatile Leica lens; Mega OIS reduces camera shake; manual focusing mode

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: No RAW; ISO 1600 limited to High-Sensitivity mode; Noise from ISO 400

TESTED APRIL 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	17

86%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Panasonic FZ7

Feature-packed 6MP camera with a 12x Leica lens

Joining the crowded superzoom market, the FZ7 is the successor to 2005's FZ5. Instead of merely upping the resolution from 5MP to 6MP, Panasonic has made some notable improvements.

The FZ7 has a full complement of exposure modes. There are 16 scene modes, as well as a Simple mode, which is fully automatic. The camera's standout feature, however, is the 36-432mm Leica lens, which moves smoothly to telephoto. The FZ7 also has Optical Image Stabiliser (OIS), which detects shake and rectifies it by shifting the OIS lens.

The FZ7 appears to have a fairly standard maximum sensitivity of ISO 400; however, in High Sensitivity mode, you can attain ISO 800 and ISO 1600 at maximum resolution. It lacks a RAW mode, however, though Panasonic has added a 16:9 photo format (for widescreen TV viewing) as well as several burst modes.

The LCD is 2.5in, compared with the FZ5's 1.8in, though the 115,000-pixel resolution is a little low. There is less space at the back as a result, and the viewfinder has been repositioned; but the Lumix is still fairly comfortable to hold, with all buttons accessible. The joystick is new and is fairly easy to operate.

The FZ7's autofocus modes include 1-area High Speed, 1-area and spot. With the inclusion of a manual focus Panasonic has addressed a criticism of the FZ5.

The sub £350 price seems reasonable – you do get a lot for your money.

VERDICT With a standout lens, fast response times and Mega OIS, the FZ5 has a lot to shout about. **WDC**

RICOH CAPLIO R5

£250 Estimated Street Price

RRP £280

7 mega pixels

- **SENSOR** 7.24MP 1/2.5inch CCD
- **LENS** 28-200mm
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 8-1/2000sec
- **ISO** Auto, 64-1600
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, 9 Scene, ±2EV, Mov
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in, 230,000pixel LCD
- **OTHER** USB 2.0 high-speed, SD/MMC, internal 26MB
- **POWER** Rechargeable cell (DB-60)
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 96 x 55 x 26mm/140g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Great lens, image stabilisation, high ISO

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Pedestrian design, image noise at high ISO, no viewfinder

TESTED NOVEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	18

87%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Ricoh Caplio R5

Nice features in a rather boxy package replaces the R4

Ricoh consistently produces interesting and innovative cameras. The Caplio R5 replaces the R4, and offers not only a long zoom but a wide and useful starting length.

FEATURES The 7MP sensor is a new addition as is the improved processor offering better image rendition and colour. The Caplio R5 also has optical image stabilisation and an impressive ISO range.

DESIGN About the size of a pack of cards, the R5 may be slightly larger than some of the superslim lifestyles, but when you consider that it has to retract a 28-200mm lens into the body, the small size seems more impressive. A decent 2.5inch LCD is on the back.

PERFORMANCE With reasonable start-up and little shutter lag, the R5 is as good as most of its competitors. The IS system is needed though, especially at maximum focal length since there's no viewfinder to aid natural stabilisation.

IMAGE QUALITY Images are sharp throughout the focal range, and plenty of detail is captured. There's some noise in the images as the gain is raised, especially at ISO 1600, but that's expected.

VALUE Though quite pricey, this offers plenty of scope, especially when compared to compacts with much shorter lenses and lower resolution.

VERDICT Good things can come in small packages. Ricoh continually offers something different from the rest. **WDC**

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KODAK EASYSHARE Z612

£260 Estimated Street Price

RRP £299

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" (5.76x 4.29mm) 6.1MP
- **LENS** Schneider-Kreuznach f2.8-f4.8 (35-420mm equivalent)
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 16-1/1000 sec
- **ISO** Auto, 80, 100, 200, 400, 800
- **EXP MODES** Auto, PASM, 16 scene modes
- **FLASH** Auto plus three modes
- **VIEWFINDER** EVF, 202,000 pixels
- **MONITOR** 2.5in
- **OTHER** SD, 32MB int memory, 30fps video
- **POWER** Li-ion
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 104 x 74 x 69mm/300g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: User-friendly; versatile lens; good range of scene and manual modes

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Clunky operation; poor shutter button design; a few image quality quirks

TESTED SEPTEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	17

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Kodak EasyShare Z612

Up close and personal with Kodak's latest 12x Superzoom

This addition to Kodak's Z-series offers an extended zoom and manual exposure controls, cast in the familiar EasyShare mould.

FEATURES Topping the spec list is a mammoth 12x zoom, courtesy of a 35-420mm equivalent Schneider-Kreuznach Variogon lens. Kodak's own optical image-stabilisation technology is on hand to rein in blurring, while a live histogram feature can be viewed on the 2.5in LCD. The Z612 features aperture and shutter priority modes, manual exposure controls, and 16 scene and five colour modes.

DESIGN The camera presents a cheerfully plastic demeanour, consisting of a comfortable grip built around the large zoom. A flat shutter-release button is tucked away on the handgrip, proving tricky to locate using fingers alone.

PERFORMANCE A prompt performance recommends the Z612. Continuous focusing and a focus lock add reliability to the camera's list of accomplishments. The zoom is mechanical but generally smooth.

IMAGE QUALITY The Kodak Z612 produces clean and punchy exposures that are awash with precise details and edges. Minor fringing in high-contrast scenes occasionally presents itself, as does image noise over ISO 400.

VALUE You get a lot of camera for your money. It may demonstrate cheerfully clunky operation and be on the bulky side, but its user-friendliness plus full PASM modes recommend it.

VERDICT A pleasing camera that lives up to its 'Superzoom' tag. Some image quality and operational quirks. **WDC**

PANASONIC LUMIX TZ-1

£260 Estimated Street Price

RRP £270

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" 5MP CCD (5.76x4.29mm)
- **LENSES** 5.2-52mm (35-350mm equiv) f/2.8-4.2
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 60-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, Simple, 19 Scene
- **ISO** Auto, 80-800
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes, GN 6.3
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in 114,000pixel LCD
- **OTHER** 848x489 and 640x480 @30fps Video, SD, OIS, optional waterproof housing
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 112 x 58 x 40mm/ 234g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Speed, spec, design, optical system, images colour

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Overprocessing leads to grainy looking images

TESTED JUNE 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	19
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	17

88%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Panasonic Lumix TZ-1

A superzoom in a compact camera's body

This latest model is a superzoom in a compact camera's body. It houses a 5MP sensor behind a 10x optical zoom lens (equivalent to 35-350mm) that looks like a fixed-focal-length lens.

FEATURES The Panasonic's lens uses a folded optical design along with Mega OIS, with the Image stabilisation incorporated into the optical train within the camera body. The 10x zoom lens also has a fast aperture range at f/2.8-4.2. The sensor offers a choice of three aspect ratios: 4:3, 3:2 and widescreen 16:9 which is also available in video mode with sound.

DESIGN The TZ-1 is, at a glance, a relatively simple camera to use. There are not many buttons or submenus to confuse the user. The build quality is nice, with that reassuring solidity coming from a cool-to-the-touch metal body.

PERFORMANCE The performance from startup onwards is impressive. The focusing and exposure systems are quick and accurate.

IMAGE QUALITY Images are OK but not fantastic from a definition point of view. As long as there isn't too much post-processing done, most people will be more than satisfied with the results.

VALUE The 10x zoom in conjunction with the excellent image stabilisation makes it a worthwhile superzoom, albeit in a very small body.

VERDICT The TZ-1 is an astonishing piece of design and construction. Were its final image quality just a bit finer it would be an absolute world-beater. **WDC**

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PENTAX OPTIO A10

£260 Estimated Street Price

RRP £345

8 mega pixels

- SENSOR 8.34MP CCD
- LENS 38-114mm f/2.8-5.4
- SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/2000sec
- ISO Auto, 50-400
- EXPOSURE MODES P, Auto, 12 Scene
- FLASH Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes, GN 6.3
- VIEWFINDER None
- MONITOR 2.5in, 232,000pixel LCD
- OTHER Five digital filters,Video, SD
- POWER Li-Ion cell
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 88.5 x 54.5 x 23mm /125g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Images are truly excellent once they've been tweaked a bit

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Very slow. You really have to work to get fantastic images

TESTED JUNE 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	15
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	16

83%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Pentax Optio A10

A 3x zooming 8MP model with Anti-shake

The 3x zooming 8MP model from Pentax is called the Optio A10. Why 10? Who knows. Why A? Perhaps because of the Anti-shake system built into the camera.

FEATURES There's multi-segment evaluative, centre-weighted or spot metering. I found that the centreweighted was the best bet in most lighting. The focusing is a five-point affair, with the relevant focus point illuminating; you can change it to a single point.

DESIGN The Optio feels light but with a reassuringly sturdy build quality. There are few buttons and so a greater reliance on the menu system, which causes the camera to be slower in action than other models of equivalent specification.

PERFORMANCE The camera takes a good while to switch on, it takes longer to focus, longer still to process the image when taken, and the flash is slow to recharge.

IMAGE QUALITY The camera seemed to underexpose consistently by a stop. But, and it is a huge but, once tweaked very slightly in Photoshop, the images were better than most other 8MP models I've tested.

VALUE If you are not a speed king and don't mind post-processing, the A10 might be a good investment. It has bags of spec for not that much money.

VERDICT For a shot that I needed to be sure of the ultimate image quality after processing in Photoshop, I'd choose the A10. It's flawed but its results can be stunning. **WDC**

CASIO EXILIM EX-Z1000

£270 Estimated Street Price

RRP £300

10 mega pixels

- SENSOR 1/1.8" CCD (7.17x5.32mm) 10.37MP
- LENS 7.9-23.7mm (38-114mm) f/2.8-5.4
- SHUTTER SPEED 4-1/2000sec
- ISO Auto, 50-400
- EXP MODES P, 37 Best Shot, Mov
- FLASH 3.6m (W)/1.9m (T) GN approx 10
- VIEWFINDER No
- MONITOR 2.8in LCD, 230,400 pixels
- OTHER SD, Anti-shake system
- POWER Li-ion
- DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT 92 x 58.4 x 22.4mm/139g

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Compact and easy on the eye. It can take great pictures at high resolution

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Some functions slow; images noisy in low light; anti-shake not always helpful

TESTED OCTOBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	16

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Casio EX-Z1000

The first compact 10MP camera

I like to carry a camera with me, but there's always a question of bulkiness or lack of features to overcome. Is the 10MP Casio EX-Z1000 the solution?

FEATURES The eye-grabbing spec detail is the 10.37MP 1/1.8inch CCD. Its 3x zoom is bog-standard. However, under this sleek, stainless steel exterior, beats a sophisticated interior: nine-point AF with macro down to 6cm, three metering modes, ISO up to 400, movie shooting at 640x480pixels and at a UK-friendly 25fps. You can do some limited movie editing in camera.

DESIGN There is obviously a slight handling downside to having something very slim (22.4mm) made of shiny metal. Pretty much all the many functions are accessed via the menu button, which slows things down, but only a touch.

PERFORMANCE Start-up and capture times of 1.3sec and 0.02 sec respectively are sparky enough for most situations. Probably the only thing that doesn't gel is the anti-shake system, while noise is an issue.

VALUE You do actually get a helluva lot for your money with the EX-Z1000.

IMAGE QUALITY The actuality of a 10MP camera's images is that, in good lighting, you get an awful lot of detail and the image is not oversharpened or degraded. When the anti-shake DSP kicks in, though, you might almost be better off with a 5MP model with a bigger CCD.

VERDICT There is a whole raft of attractive-looking compacts on the market, but few have the talent, performance and spec to back up their looks as the EX-Z1000 does. **WDC**

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SONY CYBER-SHOT H2

£270 Estimated Street Price

RRP £350

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 6MP
- **LENS** 6.0-72.0mm (36-432mm) f/2.8-3.5
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 30 – 1/2000 sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** M,A,S,P, 7 Sc, Mov, ±2EV
- **ISO** Auto, 80-1000
- **FLASH** 30cm-9m (W) / 90cm-6.8m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** EVF 201,000pixels
- **MONITOR** 2" 85,000 pixels
- **OTHER** MS Duo, Super Steady Shot IS, USB 2.0
- **POWER** 2 x AA
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 113.2 x 83 x 94mm/389g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Excellent design, good ISO range makes it good for low light, IS, flash power

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Produces slightly underexposed images and fringing

TESTED JULY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

87%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Sony H2

Second 'superzoom' from Sony holds appeal on all levels

This is the second in Sony's range of SLR-like superzooms, following last year's H1.

FEATURES This model has a 6MP 2.5inch Super HAD CCD, a size that allows a compact lens with a small image circle. In this case it's a 6-72mm Carl Zeiss Vario-Tessar f/2.8-3.7 lens (36-432mm in 35mm terms). Sony has incorporated Image Stabilisation into the camera with its SuperSteadyShot technology. This is enhanced by a high ISO, and a fast aperture offering good potential for low-light shooting.

DESIGN A chunky-feeling camera, despite its relatively small size, with good balance and a robust feel. You can feel the weight in the lens which, despite its compact length, obviously has decent glass, to enable decent light-gathering power.

PERFORMANCE Start-up is on a par with most models that have a large retractable lens; there's a short delay as the mechanically driven optics move into position, but this is around a second. The AF is quick and responsive, and shutter lag is really minimal.

IMAGE QUALITY Colour balance and white balance is good and noise is well maintained. Chromatic aberrations are seen in high-contrast conditions.

VALUE The build quality and features make the H2 good value, but the small sensor and fringing slightly negate this. However, I have found places selling it for almost £100 less than the SRP, making it better value.

VERDICT The H2 offers a good marriage of sophisticated features with ease of use. The price is also competitive, so it's well worth a look for those considering a mid-range, sub-SLR model. **WDC**

CANON DIGITAL IXUS 800

£290 Estimated Street Price

RRP £399

- **SENSOR:** 1/2.5inch CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 6MP
- **LENS:** 5.8-23.2mm (35-140mm equivalent) f/2.8-f/5.5
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS:** 1/1600sec – 15sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES:** Auto, 11 scene modes
- **ISO:** 80-800
- **FLASH:** GN: 3.5m (w), 2m (t)
- **VIEWFINDER:** Optical
- **MONITOR:** 2.5in P-Si TFT, 173,000 pixels
- **OTHER:** 9 point AiAF, spot metering, SD
- **POWER:** Li-Ion (NB-5L)
- **DIMENSIONS:** 90.4 x 56.5 x 26.4mm/165g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Design, build quality, high ISO, Image Stabiliser

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Low-light focusing not 100% reliable, no battery charge status display

TESTED JULY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	19
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

88%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Canon IXUS 800 IS

Canon's latest IXUS features Optical Image Stabilisation

Canon's IXUS design team has long been the envy of rivals, but the IXUS 800 IS is a cracker even by their standards.

FEATURES The 800 has a 4x zoom rather than the more common 3x; the 'IS' in its name denotes the presence of the Optical Image Stabilisation, to reduce camera shake; and there's a boosted maximum ISO to 800 for low-light photography.

DESIGN The 800 is discreetly curvaceous. It is comfortable to hold and retains Canon's interface which makes selecting key functions via the screen a doddle.

PERFORMANCE Speed is good, exposure accuracy is okay (occasionally leaning towards overexposure), battery life is good, but focusing, especially in low light, seems less sure.

IMAGE QUALITY Picture quality is, in general, very good. Colour rendition is excellent, noise is well controlled in good light and there is very little fringing to worry about. In low light, in high ISO mode, noise is very visible (as you'd expect at ISO 800) but not to the point where it ruins the pictures.

VALUE Canon IXUS cameras are never cheap. IXUS is, after all, a premium brand, aimed at the discerning user. So while it's at the top of its price scale for its spec, you can see where the money is going.

VERDICT The Canon Digital IXUS 800 IS is a superb example of design which offers a good range of truly useful features – especially high ISO and Image Stabilisation. It's nice to use and results are good most of the time. **WDC**

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OLYMPUS MJU 725SW

£300 Estimated Street Price

RRP £300

- **SENSOR** 1/2.33" CCD 7.38MP
- **LENS** 6.7-20.1mm (38-114mm) f/3.5-5.0
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 4-1/1000 sec
- **ISO** 80-1600
- **EXPOSURE MODES** P, 25 scene modes, Mov
- **FLASH** GN 6.8m
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.5in LCD 115,000 pixels
- **OTHER** Shockproof and waterproof, xD card, 15fps 640x480 pixels video clips
- **POWER** Li-ion with battery charger
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 91 x 58.7 x 19.8mm/149g

7 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Solid build and feel; shockproof and waterproof

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Fringing, lens flare, noise, camera shake, priced at a slight premium

TESTED DECEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

84%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Olympus Mju 725SW

Hard-bodied compact gets minimal upgrade

Available in a choice of three colours, the Olympus mju 725SW is similar to its Mju 720 SW predecessor in many ways.

FEATURES It features a 3x zoom, claims to be shockproof when dropped a distance up to 1.5m, and is waterproof to depths of 5m (the 720 managed three). Its top ISO speed is 1600.

DESIGN With the back dominated by the 2.5in LCD, there's no optical viewfinder. Attendant controls are small, but responsive. The Mju 725's all-metal body is rugged and slots easily into both your palm and your pocket.

PERFORMANCE The 725 powers up instantly. There's little shutter lag and write time is similarly swift, though, since the lens is positioned to the far right of the camera (if viewed from the front) it's easy for fingertips to stray into shot. If we're nit picking, the teeny zoom controls make accurate use awkward, while the LCD displays ghosting under artificial light. Still, the menu screens are very easy to navigate.

IMAGE QUALITY Typically, there's evidence of purple fringing between areas of high contrast, and colours are slightly washed out when compared with the vivid default results from competing compacts. Shots in less than bright light are soft due to camera shake – despite the dedicated image stabilisation setting – plus there's visible noise.

VALUE The 725SW is at the top of the price bracket for its class; you're paying a premium for its rough and tumble features and sealed, all-metal build.

VERDICT Outwardly desirable, but pictures lack punch. Still, when dropped from arm level the Mju 725SW gives hope to the butter-fingered by coming back for more. **WDC**

FUJIFILM FINEPIX S6500FD

£300 Estimated Street Price

RRP £300

- **SENSOR** 1/1.7inch Super CCD HR (Total 6.3MP, Effective 6.1MP)
- **LENS** 28-300mm f/2.8-4.9
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/4000sec
- **ISO** Auto, 100-3200
- **EXP MODES** M,A,S,P, Sc, ±2EV
- **FLASH** 3.8m (W)/2.8m (T) GN approx 6.8
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** EVF/ 2.5in LCD
- **OTHER** 10MB internal, RAW
- **POWER** 4xAA
- **DIMENSION/WEIGHT** 131 x 98 x 128mm/ 700g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Quality build, good lens range, face detection feature, compact size

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Image noise, loss of detail, poor-quality electronic viewfinder (EVF)

TESTED DECEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	16
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	15
VALUE Based on RRP	15

79%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Fujifilm FinePix S6500 FD

Bridge camera gives good face with six megapixels

Bridge cameras may not have the sex appeal of SLRs, but the S6500fd has got the long zoom, RAW, manual control, and scene modes.

FEATURES The zoom is an eminently useful 28-300mm lens, offering something for wideangle fans as well as tele folks. Fujifilm hasn't used image stabilisation, relying instead on its high ISO. The big news on the S6500fd is the new face-detection facility (hence the fd suffix), which locks onto the subject anywhere in the frame.

DESIGN With an SLR-lite look and powerful zoom, this maintains a relatively small size. It's comfortable to hold and most of the controls fall to hand.

PERFORMANCE The face detection works well, if 'well' can be defined as 'more-often-than-not'. Less impressive is the camera's electronic viewfinder, which has poor detail and a slow refresh rate, not to mention an annoying propensity to give no idea as to the image's exposure accuracy.

IMAGE QUALITY Fujifilm cameras are always good for colour and exposure, and there's no denying the sharpness of the lens. However, the JPEG algorithms seem harsh, edges break up and fine detail is sometimes lost. I'm not happy with the level of noise either.

VALUE A well-made camera, at an average price, producing average images.

VERDICT The camera is let down by a poor viewfinder and a combination of overeager JPEG compression and image noise at higher ISOs. **WDC**

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KODAK EASYSHARE V610

£300 Estimated Street Price

RRP £350

- **SENSOR** Dual 6MP CCD
- **LENSES** 38-114mm f3.9-4.4, 120-380mm f/4.8
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 8-1/1200sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, Landscape, macro + 20 Scene
- **ISO** Auto, 64-800
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 4 modes, GN 6.3
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2.8in 230,000pixel LCD
- **OTHER** 640x480 @30fps Video, SD
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 111 x 55.5 x 23.2mm/160g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
A flexible optical system, good speed of operation and a nice look and feel

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
The images at the longer focal lengths are a real disappointment

TESTED JULY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	14
VALUE Based on RRP	15

82%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Kodak EasyShare V610

Slender 10x optical zoom camera suitable for any pocket

This model combines two lenses – a 38-114mm lens and a 120-380mm lens. The combination is a 10x optical zoom in a body 23mm thick.

FEATURES The V610 has a pair of 6.36MP sensors for each lens, delivering a maximum image size of 2832x2128 pixels. There's a movie mode of 640x480 pixel movies at 30 frames per second, and 20 scene modes. The 610 gets you as close as 5cm at wideangle and 70cm at the tele end. The camera uses an SD card or 28MB internal memory and also has Bluetooth connectivity, which allows sharing of images with camera phones.

DESIGN Considering what's gone into the camera from a specification point of view, the most amazing thing is the size (or rather, lack of). Controls are well separated and have a positive feel. The 2.8-inch monitor is quick and responsive, as is the lens, although there is inevitably a pause as it switches from one lens to another.

PERFORMANCE The Kodak is a speedy beast. From a focusing and exposure point of view, there was very little to complain about. But the camera shape and the 380mm longest focal length mean that shooting in other than bright light means disappointing images.

VALUE Looks great but handling, performance and image quality mean it starts to seem a tad expensive.

IMAGE QUALITY Unless you are shooting in bright light, the combination of ISO boosting, anti-blur and image processing makes many shots look as if they have been through the impressionist filter in Photoshop.

VERDICT Not big, but it's clever. **WDC**

KODAK EASYSHARE P850

£300 Estimated Street Price

RRP £350

- **CCD** 5.1 MP effective, 5.25MP total
- **LENS** f2.8-3.7 (35mm equ 36-432mm)
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 16 – 1/1000th sec
- **ISO** Auto, 50, 64, 80, 100, 125, 160, 200, 250, 320, 400, 800 (1.2MP)
- **EXP MODES** Auto, P,A,S,M, 3 Custom, 16 scene
- **FLASH** 0.9m – 4.7m (W) 2.0- - 3.6m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** Electronic, 237,000 pixels
- **MONITOR** 2.5-inch LCD 237,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD/MMC, 32Mb int, RAW, Tiff, Mov
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 108 x 84.3 x 72mm/403g

5 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE:
Great feature set including RAW; sensitivity range; lens; stabilisation

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE:
No AF-assist lamp; image processing not very fast; image noise at higher ISOs

TESTED FEBRUARY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	15
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	15
VALUE Based on RRP	17

81%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Kodak P850

This boasts 5MP and a 12x optical mega-zoom lens

Along with the 8MP P880, the P850 is one of two releases from Kodak, hoping to challenge consumer DSLRs.

FEATURES There's a 36-432mm Schneider Kreuznach lens and comprehensive exposure and metering options. Eleven ISO settings feature, though image size is limited to 1.2MP at ISO 800. Other useful features include an image stabiliser, a hotshoe, RAW and a live histogram.

DESIGN The P850 is comfortable to hold and light enough to operate with one hand. Styling is similar to a DSLR. Many settings can be accessed through the many controls on the body without having to go into the menu. Exposure compensation, ISO, aperture and shutter settings are displayed on the LCD and are adjustable on-screen. The metal joystick for the menu is fiddly.

PERFORMANCE The AF system is adequate if not very fast. In macro mode, the camera can focus 10cm from the subject at wideangle and 90cm at telephoto. Yet there's no AF-assist lamp.

IMAGE QUALITY While satisfactory, the images were a little soft; colours were strong, though the pre-set white balance could be a little sensitive. The main problem is image noise, which is excessive at higher ISOs.

VALUE For its wide range of features on offer, many of which are found on budget SLRs, this is pretty good value for money.

VERDICT The P850 impresses, with enough manual and automatic features to appeal to a wide range of users. **WDC**

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SANYO XACTI VPC-CA6

£300 Estimated Street Price

RRP £300

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (1cm) 6MP
- **LENS** 6.3-31.7mm (38-190mm) f/3.5-4.7
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 1/2-1/2000 sec
- **ISO** Auto, 50-400
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Program, 7 Scene, Mov
- **FLASH** GN 3m
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2in LCD 86,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, 30fps MPEG-4 video clips, water resistant
- **POWER** Li-ion with battery charger
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 77 x 100 x 36mm/155g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Eye-catching design; reasonable pricing and output

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: No way of protecting LCD screen; plastic feel; slow in operation

TESTED DECEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	16
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	15
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

81%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Sanyo Xacti VPC-CA6

Water-resistant hybrid camera

Like its C6 predecessor, the CA6 sports a 6MP resolution and 5x optical zoom, but adds a body resistant to water, snow and wet hands.

FEATURES Both JPEG stills (interpolated up to a max 10MP if required) and MPEG-4 format, stereo sound video are recorded to a bundled 1GB SD card. There's no dock included this time, but with a mains charger, AV and USB leads, it isn't missed.

DESIGN This latest Xacti's plastic body is closely moulded to the shape of a palm, and feels solid despite the lack of metal. One gripe: as the LCD cannot be rotated and stored flush to the body when inactive, its screen quickly attracts fingerprints. Main controls fall readily under the thumb, yet it's easy to let your forefinger stray in front of the lens. Finding a firm grip is tricky.

PERFORMANCE Powering up in just over a second, you have to press the 'photo' button quite firmly, and there's a three-second wait to review the shot if switching from record to review mode.

IMAGE QUALITY Exposure is even, colours natural, and purple fringing between areas of high contrast is only noticeable upon close inspection.

VALUE With a 1GB card, and £200 cheaper than its predecessor on launch, the Xacti CA6 is great value.

VERDICT Slightly fiddly to use and slow, but images are better than expected. The wow factor of its looks and a street price of £250 go some way to making this critic-proof. **WDC**

CANON POWERSHOT S3-IS

£310 Estimated Street Price

RRP £450

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29mm) 6MP
- **LENS** 6.0-72.0mm (36-432mm) f/2.7-3.5
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 15 – 1/2000 sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** M,A,S,P, 14 Sc, Mov, ±2EV
- **ISO** Auto, High ISO Auto, 80- 800
- **FLASH** 50cm-5.2m (W) / 90cm-4.0m (T)
- **VIEWFINDER** EVF 115,000pixels
- **MONITOR** 2" 115,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, MyColour mode, photo in video, IS USM lens
- **POWER** 4 x AA
- **SIZE/WEIGHT** 113.4 x 78 x 75.5mm/410g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Well-made body, good features and zoom. It's capable of excellent results

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Some fringing, no RAW and poor EVF. A larger sensor would reduce noise

TESTED JULY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	17

89%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Canon S3 IS

The third incarnation of Canon's consumer superzoom

This model keeps the styling and zoom of previous models, but adds new features and more pixels.

FEATURES The sensor is a 6MP CCD with sensitivity stretched from ISO 80 to 800. There's Image Stabilisation on the 12x zoom lens, and a fast maximum aperture of f/2.8 - f/3.5. So we have a camera with a big, fast aperture, Image Stabilisation and high ISO, so what else does Canon add? A new sports mode. This offers fast 2.3fps shooting, and selects fast shutter speeds. There are also new MyColour modes, allowing you to change colours in-camera before or after shooting the image.

DESIGN It's not the lightest camera around, but as a result is feels solid and robust in the hand. The user-friendly body design and layout is straightforward without being too cluttered.

PERFORMANCE The zoom is nippy and sensitive, but a stepped zoom can be frustrating if you need really accurate framing – in which case, you need to physically move or shoot wider and crop later.

VALUE At £450 RRP the S3 IS is overpriced but it's a good example of its kind and street prices are lower.

IMAGE QUALITY The S3 IS is capable of some very good results but the extremes of the lens can cause fringing towards the corners. Sharpness is excellent, aided by the IS at slower shutter speeds.

VERDICT It's a very nice camera indeed – well made features and specs and capable of producing some fantastic results. **WDC**

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FUJIFILM FINEPIX S9500

£330 Estimated Street Price

RRP £400

- **CCD** 9.2MP Total, 9MP effective
- **LENS** 28-300mm f/2.8-4.9
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 1/4-1/4000sec
- **ISO** 80-1600
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, M, A, S, P + 5 Scene, Mov
- **FLASH** Built-in, Hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** EVF/ 1.8in 235,000 pixel LCD
- **OTHER** xD and CF I & II slots
- **POWER** 4x AA
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 128 x 93 x 29mm/645g

9 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Excellent noise control, a good range of features, manual zoom and controls

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Some quirky handling, expensive. Larger prints show loss of detail

TESTED DECEMBER 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

86%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA choice

Fujifilm Finepix S9500

The S9500 boasts a 9MP sensor. That's just for starters

Fujifilm has a long tradition of producing bridge cameras stretching right back to 2000. Its latest is a 9MP beast dubbed the S9500.

FEATURES The 9MP SuperCCD promises prints of 17x 13 inches (at 200dpi). There's also Fuji's Real Photo Technology enabling use in lower light than other cameras. Because faster shutter speeds can be used, camera shake can be halted at capture. Well specified, the lens covers a versatile range and has a manual zoom control. Exposure options include manual, aperture priority, shutter priority and program, as well as auto and a collection of five scene modes.

DESIGN A small 1.8in LCD detracts from an otherwise user-friendly camera body. It offers all the essential controls you'd expect in a design that keeps the bulk of the lens to a minimum.

PERFORMANCE The EVF suffers in general use from a rather severe flicker. The AF system is better, and hits the mark pretty much every time. The menu has some useful functions and can be reached quickly, wherein lie such gems as the ISO and Chroma settings.

IMAGE QUALITY The S9500 does good smaller prints, but at A3 size there's a lack of detail, especially in shadow areas. The camera does a great job of controlling noise, and colour is good.

VALUE You get a lot of megapixels for your money, but this camera lacks some of Fuji's most recent advancements.

VERDICT There's a lot to like about the S9500, not least its overall feel. There's some image quality issues, but overall it's not half bad. **WDC**

SANYO XACTI C6

£340 Estimated Street Price

RRP £500

- **SENSOR** 1/2.5" CCD (5.76x4.29m) 6MP
- **LENS** 6.3-31.7mm (38-190mm) f/3.5-4.7
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 1/2-1/2000sec
- **ISO** Auto, 50-400/450-3600 video mode
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Program, Mov
- **FLASH** GN 3m
- **VIEWFINDER** None
- **MONITOR** 2in LCD 210,000 pixels
- **OTHER** SD, 30fps video MPEG-4
- **POWER** Li-Ion with cradle charger
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 68 x 108 x 23mm/140g

6 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: The idea

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: The execution

TESTED AUGUST 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	15
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	12
VALUE Based on RRP	12

73%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Sanyo Xacti C6

Sanyo's latest video camera hybrid

Most cameras have a movie mode, but Sanyo goes the other way – it's more of a video camera with digital camera built in.

FEATURES The C6 is a flash-based video camera. It's also a 6MP stills camera with 5x optical zoom and 60x digital zoom. Video is recorded on MPEG 4 with stereo sound and a widescreen option; stills are recorded as JPEG. The camera comes with a dock for docking, A/V connection and USB downloading.

DESIGN The small, slim camera resembles a Star Trek phaser, or a small DV camera. The 2in LCD flips from the side, and the controls are clustered behind the lens housing. All the controls are easy to use and reach, ideally placed for the thumb.

PERFORMANCE An annoying voice tells you to set the date and time. It's also lightweight which means video tends to be jerky, and as it's really designed for one-handed use, the risk of camera shake is higher than usual.

IMAGE QUALITY Fringing, lack of corner definition and sharpness, all combined with colour and JPEG artefacts make these among the worst 6MP images I've seen. Video doesn't begin to compete with DV either.

VALUE The Xacti series hasn't dropped in price since 2004, so represents less value now than it did then, which even then wasn't good.

VERDICT With this, we're getting the worst of both worlds. I'm sure things will improve, but I have yet to meet a combi video-still cam I like. **WDC**

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PANASONIC LUMIX FZ30

£360 Estimated Street Price

RRP £550

- **SENSOR** 8.3MP/8MP effective
- **LENS** 35-420mm f2.8-3.7
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 60-1/2000sec
- **ISO** 80-400
- **EXP MODES** Auto, P, A, S, M, 14 Sc
- **FLASH** GN 7m (Auto), hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** EVF/2in LCD
- **OTHER** SD, PictBridge, USB 2.0, Mega OIS, RAW, TIFF, JPEG
- **POWER** Li-Ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 141 x 86 x 138 mm/740g

8 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Good feature set, better handling than ever, EVF

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Noise at higher ISO, camera shake, menu-based features, RAW conversion

TESTED NOVEMBER 2005

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	17
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	16
VALUE Based on RRP	17

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Panasonic FZ30

Panasonic has beefed up an old favourite

Each new FZ camera has continued to impress, and the FZ30 represents a further leap in Superzoom technology for Panasonic.

FEATURES The 35-420mm Leica lens has manual zoom and focus rings which, in MF mode, work in conjunction with the viewfinder to allow for accurate manual lens control. The AF has been revamped, with a choice of focusing points, with a nine-point sensor, and increased AF speed.

DESIGN An upgraded EVF is the best yet seen on a Panasonic. Similarly the 2in LCD has had a revamp; it's a flip-and-twist type, which offers protection and allows viewing from unusual angles. Camera handling in manual and AE modes has been improved by the inclusion of two control dials on the front and back of the body.

PERFORMANCE Panasonic's Venus II processor is present, which offers a fast start-up time of 0.97seconds, and a 0.01sec shutter lag, making the camera much more responsive than its predecessor.

IMAGE QUALITY Colours are good, though white balance seemed a tad on the cold side in shady conditions. Sharpness is good too, although there is still a danger of camera shake at the long end of the lens.

VALUE There are some great features for the price, not least the finely crafted lens. But if you spend a little extra money, you can purchase the upgraded FZ50.

VERDICT Features and specs are good and with care the FZ30 can produce excellent results. **WDC**

PANASONIC LUMIX FZ50

£400 Estimated Street Price

RRP £499

- **SENSOR** 1/1.8" Type CCD (7.2 x 5.3mm), 10.1MP
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 1/4 - 1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, P, A, S, M, 16 scene
- **ISO** 80-1600
- **FLASH** Built in, TTL hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER** 0.44" EVF
- **MONITOR** 2", 207,000 pixel LCD
- **OTHER** SD, SDHC, MMC, RAW, 30fps
- **POWER** Li-ion
- **DIMENSIONS** 141 x 86 x 142mm
- **WEIGHT** 734g

10 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Good images, quality lens, manual functionality, speed

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Electronic viewfinder lag, low burst frame rate, large body, image noise

TESTED NOVEMBER 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	16
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	17

85%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Panasonic FZ50

A Superzoom update to the successful Lumix FZ30

A year after Panasonic's FZ30 Superzoom comes a revamped version. The FZ50 breaks little new ground aesthetically, but a look under the bonnet confirms more than a mild tinker.

FEATURES The FZ50 inherits specifications from the FZ30 including manual focus and zoom rings, adding a 1/1.8-inch 10.1-megapixel CCD, plus sensitivity up to a maximum ISO 1600 at full resolution. An f/2.8 Leica DC Vario-Elmarit 12x optical zoom lens is equipped with image stabilisation.

DESIGN The lens adds bulk to the camera but its control layout avoids clutter. The 2-inch LCD flips out to 180°, making it easier to view. A hotshoe is another addition.

PERFORMANCE The FZ50 is not as intuitive as some of its rivals, but the Function button and customisation smooth the way. Startup and write times are respectable, the autofocus is responsive, only lagging at the extremes of the focal length.

IMAGE QUALITY Noise afflicts images at higher ISOs. Colour and white balance is good, and while high-contrast scenes and low light present exposure problems, the FZ50 is an above-average performer.

VALUE Among rival Superzooms the FZ50 compares well. The problem is that the price offers equal scope for investing in a budget SLR with a larger sensor.

VERDICT Offers a high-value alternative for those who don't have the means or desire to invest in a DSLR. **WDC**

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RICOH GR DIGITAL

£400 Estimated Street Price

RRP £400

- **SENSOR** Effective 8.13MP
- **LENS** 28mm equiv f/2.4
- **SHUTTER SPEEDS** 180-1/2000sec
- **EXPOSURE MODES** Auto, M,A,P plus 2 scene
- **ISO** Auto, 64-1600
- **FLASH** Built-in, Auto plus 5 modes. Hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER** Hotshoe based optical
- **MONITOR** 2.5inch 210,000 pixel TFT
- **OTHER** 320x240 Video, SD
- **POWER** Li-Ion cell/2xAAA cells
- **DIMENSIONS/ WEIGHT** 107 x 58 x 25mm/ 170g

8 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Great specifications, flexible controls and an excellent lens

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: Noise at higher ISOs, lack of critical sharpness on JPEGs

TESTED FEBRUARY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	18
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	18
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	17
VALUE Based on RRP	16

87%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Ricoh GR Digital

Digital version of 35mm classic for pictorialists

The GR Digital is the first digital camera worthy to bear the illustrious GR name. High praise?

FEATURES The chip is an 8MP 1/1.8inch variety, recording in JPEG or DNG format. The lens is a fixed-focal-length one. It's easier to build great fixed-focal-length lenses than great zooms and there's an accessory 0.75x lens that clips over the main lens to give you a 21mm superwideangle. A five-way controller allows you to peer into the complex interior operation of the GR digital. This is certainly not a £400 point-and-shoot special.

DESIGN When you pick up the GR, you get the impression that you have picked up quality. The simple layout doesn't frighten the novice photographer, but the depth of the menu functions makes you aware of the power beneath.

PERFORMANCE The speed of start-up is encouraging and processing time is dependent on the type of file being written – RAW files always take longer. Focusing is also, by and large, speedy.

IMAGE QUALITY Results that the GR Digital produced were, by and large, excellent. Like all very high resolution/small-sensor cameras, there is still a bit of a question mark over the quality of 8MP images, but these are as good as I've seen so far.

VALUE If you are torn between this and a very high-quality film compact, this is great value.

VERDICT The lens and camera build are great, but you really need RAW for best results. It's still a unique offering for the price, though. **WDC**

SONY CYBER-SHOT R1

£560 Estimated Street Price

RRP £700

- **SENSOR** 10.8MP total/10.3MP effective
- **SHUTTER SPEED** 30-1/2000sec
- **ISO** 160-3200
- **EXP MODES** P, A, S, M, Scene
- **FLASH** Pop up GN 8.5m, hotshoe
- **VIEWFINDER/MONITOR** EVF/2"LCD
- **OTHER** CF I/II, MS Pro, USB 2.0, sRGB and Adobe RGB and vivid RGB
- **POWER** Lithium-ion
- **DIMENSIONS/WEIGHT** 139 x 156 x 97mm/929g

10 mega pixels

scores

WHAT WE LIKE: Excellent images, build and design

WHAT WE DON'T LIKE: LCD and EVF can be hard to see, slow burst, macro

TESTED JANUARY 2006

FEATURES Specifications, controls	17
DESIGN Build, handling, ease of use	18
PERFORMANCE Metering, focus etc	17
IMAGE QUALITY Sharpness, colour etc	18
VALUE Based on RRP	18

88%

View this camera 360° www.whatdigitalcamera.com

Sony Cyber-shot R1

Can Sony's premuim bridge camera rival an SLR?

The R1's headline feature is an impressive APS-C sized sensor, the 10MP CMOS sensor.

FEATURES The advantage of a larger sensor is that it should lead to lower noise, more sensitivity and increased dynamic range. SLRs have a wider ISO range, and the R1 matches those cameras with an ISO range of 160 to 3200. Sony has also included a Carl Zeiss T* 24-120mm f/2.8-4.8 lens.

DESIGN The camera reminds me of a medium format camera thanks to the top-plate LCD, which lifts from a flat position and can also be folded away for protection. This means users can shoot from unusal angles and still view images.

PERFORMANCE Using the camera on days with low sun causes problems. The LCD and the EVF are difficult to see and the EVF also drags if the camera is not held still. The R1 isn't the fastest off the blocks, and Raw shooting can be slow, with about six seconds between shots after the first two.

IMAGE QUALITY JPEG processing is nice and natural, without oversharpening the images. Colour is good too, with nice saturation that maintains tones and contrast. Exposures are also spot on, with very few pictures needing much tweaking.

VERDICT The R1 isn't for everyone and still lacks the versatility and speed of an SLR, but it is without doubt the best bridge camera on the market today, and offers great value for money when you consider the cost of the equivalent high-quality lenses for a film SLR. **WDC**

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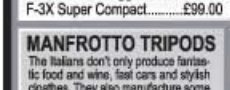

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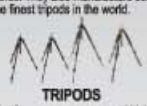

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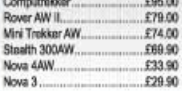

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The Top 10 Lenses

Want to buy a top optic? Stop here...

Tamron
55-200mm f/4-5.6 Di II LD

Tamron's 55-200mm lens equates roughly to 80-300mm on a 35mm camera, and offers an angle of view of 28°28'-7°59' based on a 1.5x APS-C magnification ratio. As a Di II lens the imaging circle is too small for full-frame sensors or film use. Featuring LD (Low Dispersion) glass, the optic also has macro capability, with a minimum focus distance of 95cm throughout the zoom range and a macro magnification ratio of 1:3.5 at 200mm. The lens body is constructed mostly of polycarbonate. Weighing 300g, it's also compact. A switch on the side allows Manual or AF focus control. Sharpness is well controlled, and images are punchy. Very high contrast areas show some chromatic aberrations, but if your aperture is closed down you should have little trouble.

the info www.intro2020.co.uk **£130**

MOUNT: Canon, Nikon, Konica Minolta/Sony
CONSTRUCTION: 13 elements in 9 groups
TESTED: October 2006

87%

Sigma
17-70mm DC

This lens offers close focusing down to 20cm, and a macro ratio of 1:2.3. The 'DC' suffix means it's optimised for the APS-C sized sensor, and it's also physically smaller than we'd expect for this focal range. Despite that it's fast, with a maximum aperture of f/2.8 at the wide end and f/4.5 at the telephoto. Minimum aperture is f/22. The lens includes an element made from Special Low Dispersion glass and two aspherical elements, to correct for a range of aberrations. It's sturdily constructed of metal and plastic, with a metal mount. The focus and zoom ring are comfortable and secure, with a locking device preventing the zoom slipping from 17mm when the lens is dangling from a camera strap. Images are sharp, with crisp contrast and good colour.

the info www.sigma-imaging-uk.com **£270**

MOUNT: Nikon, Canon, Sigma, Pentax, Konica Minolta
CONSTRUCTION: 15 elements in 12 groups
TESTED: July 2006

88%

Sigma
70mm f/2.8 EX DG Macro

The 'EX DG' suffix places this macro lens in Sigma's premium range, offering a 'full frame' imaging circle so it can be used with APS-C sized sensors, full-frame sensors and 35mm film cameras. If you're using an APS-C sensor, the 1.5x magnification offers a field of view equivalent to 105mm on a film camera. The lens uses a Special Low Dispersion (SLD) optic and a pair of high refractive SLD elements. A focus limiter switch will speed up AF. The 527g lens has a metal mount and tough outer casing. As shooting macro reduces depth of field dramatically, you need to stop down for maximum sharpness. Images are as sharp as a knife, with excellent contrast and resolution. Chromatic aberration is practically non-existent in the centre. Good value.

the info www.sigma-imaging-uk.com **£339**

MOUNT: Sigma, Canon, Nikon (D), Sony, Pentax
CONSTRUCTION: 10 elements in 9 groups
TESTED: November 2006

88%

Sigma
70-200mm f/2.8 EX DG Macro HSM

Its f/2.8 aperture means this lens is bigger than your average f/3.5-5.6 type zoom; it weighs 1345g. It has a metal mount, a tough shell, and deep and secure rubberised zoom and focus rings. There's a detachable tripod mount-ring too. As a DG lens, it's digitally optimised for APS-C sensors and full-frame cameras. It also works on 35mm film cameras, while the lens has a fast, quiet Hyper Sonic Motor fitted. Focusing is internal, and the AF servo also allows manual focus in AF mode for quick corrections. The macro focuses as close as 100cm throughout the zoom range. Test charts show really good performance at 70mm, peaking at f/5.6, and staying high throughout. At 200mm the lens performs best at f/11, before sharpness dips. The lens controls chromatic aberration well, with good macro results too.

the info www.sigma-imaging-uk.com **£800**

MOUNT: Nikon, Canon, Sigma
CONSTRUCTION: 18 elements in 15 groups
TESTED: September 2006

92%

Canon *85mm f1.2 USM L*

An 85mm lens is great for the portrait photographer, but this one also has an f/1.2 aperture, which means you can use it in low available light, as its light-gathering power is tremendous. Second, at maximum aperture you can achieve very shallow depth of field, allowing pin-sharp eyes and out-of-focus hair and skin, giving images a dreamy quality. A lens with this much light-gathering power needs to be large; the front and rear elements are chunks of glass, and the weight reflects this. The lens uses Super Spectra coatings to help reduce flare and ghosting. As a USM model, the lens is fast and whisper quiet. Overall contrast is crisp, based on use with a Canon EOS 30D, and colour very good. Sharpness overall is great, especially as the aperture is stopped down with pin-sharp images, and no sign of chromatic aberration. Vignetting and distortion are well controlled too. Worth every penny.

the *info* www.canon.co.uk **£1630**

MOUNT: Canon EF
CONSTRUCTION: 8 elements in 7 groups
TESTED: August 2006

88%

Nikon *18-200mm VR*

The AF-S DX Nikkor 18-200mm f3.5-5.6 G IF-ED VR is optimised for Nikon's DX format sensor, so offers an equivalent focal length of 27-300mm in a very small form. At just 560g, the lens is well built, though the manual focus ring is a bit loose. The lens incorporates two ED elements and three aspherical lenses. The outer case is plastic, while the two inner barrels are metal. A big advantage is the Vibration Reduction that allows, Nikon claims, up to 4 stops slower shutter speeds. So, instead of shooting at a minimum shutter speed of 1/250sec at maximum focal length, you could shoot at 1/30sec and still obtain sharp images. Contrast and tone is generally really good. The focus can struggle to lock on, especially in low light or low contrast. Overall, very good results.

the *info* www.nikon.co.uk **£549**

MOUNT: Nikon EF
CONSTRUCTION: 16 elements in 12 groups
TESTED: June 2006

89%

Nikon *60mm f/2.8 D*

This well-built Macro lens boasts a full-frame imaging circle, offering the equivalent of 90mm on Nikon digital cameras. It has a deep-set front element set within the barrel to cut flare. There's a focus limiter switch, and you can switch from auto to manual focus with a button behind the main focus ring. There's a traditional aperture ring for older cameras. This needs to be set to f/32 and a small locking switch set for it to work with the controls on a DSLR. In the test charts, the lens maintained a high MTF (Modulation Transfer Frequency) reading throughout the aperture range. This makes it a fantastic lens for flat copying work where edge-to-edge sharpness is critical. Wide-open apertures showed minor fringing at the corners, but insignificant chromatic aberration in the centre.

the *info* www.nikon.co.uk **£439**

MOUNT: Nikon EF
CONSTRUCTION: 8 elements in 7 groups
TESTED: August 2006

92%

Sigma *105mm f/2.8 EX DG Macro*

Another full-frame lens, this offers 1:1 magnification with a minimum focus distance of 31.3cm. The fast aperture can be stopped down to f/45, or f/32 on Pentax and Nikon bodies. On most APS sized cameras, the lens has a 1.5x magnification effect offering 157.5mm in 35mm terms. The lens has a dual-focus function: the focus ring snaps backward and forward between manual and AF, making critical adjustments easy. There's a limiting switch too, so AF stays within a narrow range. Chromatic aberration was insignificant throughout the aperture test; sharpness is reasonable. A reasonably priced lens offering decent if not mind-blowing images.

the *info* www.sigma-imaging-uk.com **£339**

MOUNT: Nikon, Canon, Sigma
CONSTRUCTION: 11 elements in 10 groups
TESTED: August 2006

81%

Sigma *50mm f2.8 EX DG*

A full-frame compatible lens, this has an impressive maximum aperture of f/2.8, dropping to f/45 minimum (f/32 on Nikon or Pentax cameras). This is worth considering if you need maximum depth of field, as the closer you are to a subject, the shallower the depth of field and this is even truer with a macro lens. Close focus distance is 18.9cm, with a true 1:1 magnification. Special lens coatings are designed to reduce flare, ghosting and lateral chromatic aberrations. The very small minimum aperture allows plenty of depth of field, but test charts show that performance is adequate, with best results at f/11. Chromatic aberration results are very good at the centre of the frame, with moderate fringing at the corners. A good budget lens.

the *info* www.sigma-imaging-uk.com **£229**

MOUNT: Nikon, Canon, Sigma
CONSTRUCTION: 10 elements in 9 groups
TESTED: August 2006

81%

Canon *EF 100mm f/2.8*

Expensive and a tad big, this 100mm f/2.8 Macro USM optic has Canon's typically reliable and tough build quality, and – because it's also suitable for full-frame cameras – is heavy, at 600g. The minimum aperture of f/32 allows plenty of depth of field. The lens has a dual switch for focus limiting and a separate switch for switching between autofocus and manual focus. It also offers full-time manual focus while in AF mode for fine tuning. The Canon 100mm MTF charts are less impressive than those of optics that have shorter focal lengths. Best performance for sharpness is achieved at f/8 and holds steady until f/16 when sharpness begins to dip. Fringing control is top notch.

the *info* www.canon.co.uk **£470**

MOUNT: Canon EF
CONSTRUCTION: 12 elements in 8 groups
TESTED: August 2006

87%

The Top 10 Printers

To do justice to your photos, you'll probably want one of these...

Canon Selphy DS810

The DS810's proliferation of buttons can appear daunting, but it is very easy to use as each button controls one function only. Set-up is straightforward. You can print directly from CF and SD cards, a PictBridge-enabled digital camera or a mobile phone (with optional Bluetooth unit). Choose from 12 print layouts, including passport photos and album pages. You can apply a range of effects to your pictures including redeye correction. While the tilting 2.5in LCD is a good size, its resolution makes it hard to see the impact of effects. I clocked 80 seconds for a 6x4in print. Prints seem a bit dark, and skin tones are a touch warm, but results are more than adequate for the home user. There's no battery for printing on the move.

the info www.canon.co.uk **£130**
TYPE: Inkjet printer (6 x 4in prints)
RESOLUTION: 4800x1200dpi
INTERFACE: USB, SD, CF
84%

Lexmark P450

The P450 is essentially a small 6x4in printer, with media card slots, USB connection and PictBridge compatibility. But it also has a CD burner. The CD burner is useful for people who want to print at home without the hassle of a PC, but still need to archive their pictures from the card. You can also copy to USB flash drives and connect to a TV for slideshows. Of course, you can also print from CDs. It's easy to operate, produces reasonable print quality and works fairly quickly. I made a print from a mobile phone using USB in a couple of minutes, though I couldn't burn a CD from that model. Prints and creation of a CD from a media card was easy. An optional Bluetooth adaptor can be purchased and used as another way to transfer data.

the info www.lexmark.co.uk **£150**
TYPE: 6x4in printer/CD Burner
RESOLUTION: 4800x1200dpi
INTERFACE: USB/ All major Media cards/CD
88%

Sagem Photo Easy 260

This dinky unit accepts all popular memory cards, or you can connect it via USB to a Mac or PC. Camera phone users can transfer images via Infra Red or via an optional Bluetooth adaptor. PictBridge-enabled cameras can be connected via USB. The 1.8" LCD screen lets you scroll and zoom through images, and there's a button for Crystal Image mode, that improves colour, saturation and sharpness, plus redeye removal. A 6MP image takes 75 seconds to print. Very easy to use, the device supports image sizes of up to 12MP and file sizes of up 6MB. Adjustments can be made to brightness and colour, and there's a black & white mode. Images are slightly flat. The Crystal Image mode improves things marginally, but at £17 for replacement media and ribbon, the 42p per print is quite steep considering the quality.

the info www.sagem.com **£140**
TYPE: 6x4inch Dye Sub photo printer
RESOLUTION: 4800x1200dpi
INTERFACE: USB, SD, CF
83%

Sony SnapLab

This is essentially a commercial printer, printing up to 5x7inches. However, it is also aimed at events and social photographers, who want an on-the-spot printing facility – for them, this printer could quickly pay for itself. It's easy to use too. An 8inch touch-screen LCD walks you, or the customer, through the printing process. The unit is DPOF-compatible, allowing pre-selected pictures to be printed automatically. There are also limited options to edit photos, including redeye removal and adding border effects. In fact, you could create your own border, with logos for adding to event photographs. Print quality displays good punchy colour and contrast, and no signs of banding. Print times of around 30 seconds per print is very good.

the info CONTACT: www.sony.com **£1200**
TYPE: Commercial Thermal Dye Sublimation photo
RESOLUTION: n/a
INTERFACE: USB, MS, SD, MMC, CF, MD, xD, SM
92%

Kodak
Printer Dock Plus Series 3

Including Bluetooth and IrDA, plus camera phone compatibility, this diminutive printer produces 6x4in prints directly from Kodak cameras. The camera sits in the dock on the top of the unit, and images can be selected and printed in a few minutes. The print time per print is 60 seconds, so even a set of 40 is faster than a one-hour minilab. However, the dye sub media is quite expensive at £20 for a 40-print pack. The price drops if you buy bulk though (a 160-print pack). The system is easy to use, and comes with the excellent Easyshare software for printing from PC, and there's the bonus that it will charge your camera. Print quality is acceptable.

the *info* www.kodak.com **£130**

TYPE: 6x4inch Dye-sub photo printer
FEATURES: USB 2.0, Bluetooth, IRDA, Kodak camera direct printing and recharging

86%

HP
Photosmart Pro B9180

Built like a tank, HP's pigment-based A3+ printer will suit a professional studio photographer as well as the serious hobbyist. The B9180 uses four replaceable print heads, each handling two colours. The printer boasts eight colours, including Photo black and Matte black, which are switched automatically depending on the media type selected. It prints sizes from 10 x 15cm to A3 and envelopes. An easy-to-use control panel gives options including: Print a test page, Clean print heads, Align print heads, and Calibrate printer. The printer is easy to set up, and the quality of printing is outstanding.

the *info* www.hp.com **£499**

TYPE: 6x4inch Dye-sub photo printer
RESOLUTION: 4800x120dpi
INTERFACE: Four card slots, USB 2.0, PictBridge

93%

Canon
Pixma iX4000

This four-ink A3 printer offers 4800 x 1200dpi printing from four replaceable inks. Ink-drop size is a reasonable 2 picolitres using Canon's FINE print head. Canon now offers over 100 years' archivability using the Canon Chromalife 100 system of inks and papers. There's a USB 2.0 connection for the computer, and a secondary USB port for PictBridge-enabled cameras. Printing is fast, but print quality is disappointing. The blacks are very weak, so images lack contrast, which isn't helped by a weak set of colour renditions. Though well priced and easy to operate, it suffers in comparison to the 6+ ink machines.

the *info* www.canon.co.uk **£249**

TYPE: A3+ Inkjet printer
RESOLUTION: 4800dpi
INTERFACE: USB 2.0, PictBridge

81%

Canon
Pixma MP530

The MP530 is a small office printer/scanner/copier/fax unit. On the print side it uses individual RGB ink tanks and a black dye, as well as a black pigment ink tank for document printing. The scanner scans up to A4. Both these components can be accessed through the PC. This is a speedy unit, with print times of about a minute, less for 6x4in. Prints are punchy, with reasonable colour. Highlight detail is well maintained and blacks are rich, with some shadow detail lost. As a scanner, the unit again loses shadow detail. A useful addition to the SOHO environment, but not for serious photography.

the *info* www.canon.co.uk **£249**

TYPE: All-in-one
FEATURES: Printer (9600x2400dpi), Scanner (1200x1400ppi)
INKS: Individual RGBK Dye plus K pigment

82%

Sagem
Photo Easy 110

The Photo Easy 110's design is the first clamshell type so the top half opens up, making it easy to fit the three-colour ribbon cartridge. More geared to users of camera phones, its connection options include Infrared, and optional BlueTooth and Wi-Fi modules. The unit also offers direct printing from a camera or computer using USB2.0 or PictBridge. There's also a nine-in-one card reader slot, which doesn't fit any camera or mobile phone card I have. Prints appear in less than a minute and print quality isn't bad, especially if the Crystal Image function is used. However, prints are a bit more yellow than I'd like when printing from a camera. Printing from a PC is better. Mobile-phone images are okay.

the *info* www.sagem.co.uk **£100**

TYPE: 6x4inch Dye-sub photo printer
INKS: C, M, Y
INTERFACE: USB 2.0, PictBridge, Infrared

75%

Sony
DPP-FP55

The portable FP55 produces 6x4in prints from PC, PictBridge or using either of two card slots – for Memory Stick and SD. Cameras using CF or XD would need to be connected via USB. There's no iRDA or Bluetooth. The printer has a nice pearl finish. Its buttons are all big, bold and easy to follow, while a 2inch LCD allows image preview and menu screens. Image-editing features include colour options, redeye reduction, and a creative print option for printing personalised calendars, for instance. Print quality is about average for these units. I've seen a lot worse, but generally prints are a bit flat. Detail doesn't match that of a good inkjet, but it's okay for quick snaps. The price is about average.

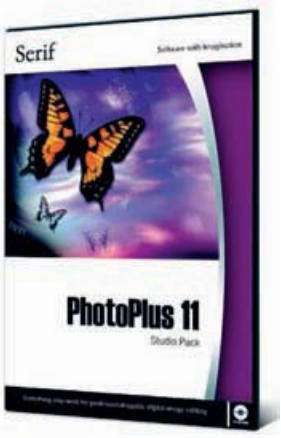
the *info* www.sony.co.uk **£100**

TYPE: 6x4inch Dye-sub photo printer
RESOLUTION: 4800dpi
INTERFACE: USB, SD, MS, MS PRO

82%

The Top 10 Software

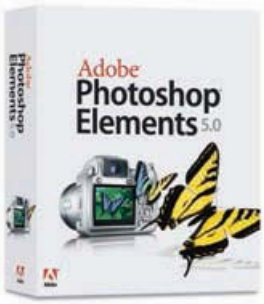
From the cream of organising packages to your best bets for image editing, here are our top picks of the software applications you just can't live without



Serif PhotoPlus 11 Studio Pack

the info
£59.99
CONTACT: www.serif.com
PLATFORM: PC only
84%

The latest version of Serif's PC-only digital image editor boasts image-enhancement and adjustment tools plus image organiser AlbumPlus4. The updated main package features new user-friendly features including QuickFix Studio, a 'How to' tab to get instant help, plus a useful 'crop to print size' feature and an instant screen capture setting. The interface and toolbox with its self-explanatory icons and pull down menus will appear somewhat familiar to Photoshop users, while remaining simple to navigate. There's a lot on offer here for the price, which is good news for anyone looking for a user-friendly alternative to CS2.



Adobe Photoshop Elements 5.0

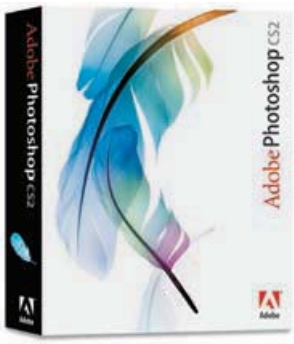
the info
£69.99
CONTACT: www.adobe.co.uk
PLATFORM: PC, Elements 4 available for Mac
84%

Offering a slick new interface and a multitude of fresh tools, Elements 5.0 continues to build on previous versions of the software to bring a low-cost solution to home image editors. The overall design is well thought out, while new tools include Correct Camera Distortions, Adjust Colour Curves and an overhauled image organiser interface. Most hobbyist photographers may never need all the features that are incorporated in Photoshop CS2, so Elements 5 may be the answer. It may not be a significant improvement over version 4, but it's still an exceptional application at a fraction of the price of Photoshop CS2. We haven't found many things that can't be done with Elements.

Corel Paint Shop Pro Photo XI

the info
£77
CONTACT: www.corel.co.uk
PLATFORM: PC only
89%

New features inside the 11th edition of PSP include a revamped photo organiser, an innovative Colour Changer Tool, a host of new film-like filters and enhanced Crop, Levels and Curves tools. There's a lot of content, especially considering the sub-£100 price point. Paint Shop Pro has been around for several years and it has a large following. It's a superb application that deserves all the praise it receives. Corel is putting a lot of effort into producing a better application with each release, and it is succeeding. Though this is not a major improvement over Paint Shop Pro X, it's still great value for money.



Adobe Photoshop CS2

the info
£577
CONTACT: www.adobe.co.uk
PLATFORM: PC and Mac
91%

Adobe Photoshop CS2 is without doubt a superb application; you can spend hours, weeks or months with it and still discover new features or a better way to accomplish a task. After many years at the top, there is still no other image-editing application that even comes close; Photoshop just gets better with each version. If you have version 7.0 or older then don't hesitate, upgrade now. If you are a CS user then perhaps you should consider whether the new features – which include Adobe Bridge, an advanced Lens Correction filter and enhanced RAW support – will benefit your photographic style.

iView *Media Pro 3*

One of the most popular organising tools has been revamped as iView Media Pro moves to version 3. Key enhancements include improved speed: importing is faster and more stable than before. Batch control is also improved, with automatic file renaming, copying to folders and annotation while images are moved from camera or memory card. It all represents a major upgrade for Media Pro. The new tools are very useful, and while the program has many competitors, there are few that can truly match the combination of speed and convenience of this software. Reflecting this, the price is also higher than basic album software, but pretty reasonable considering the power and flexibility.

the *info*

£129

CONTACT: www.iview-multimedia.com
PLATFORM: PC and Mac

87%

Adobe *Lightroom Beta*

Adobe Lightroom offers photographers a streamlined workflow solution. It allows images to be imported, either DNG, RAW, JPEG or TIFF, and catalogued with metadata, keywords and shooting information. While it doesn't require new graphics cards, Lightroom is quite memory intensive, and you need at least 768MB of RAM. However, we tried it on a slower machine and it still worked, just with a lot more waiting. In a side-by-side comparison with Aperture on a G5 Quad, Lightroom ran faster, which was impressive, especially for a beta. Adobe has not indicated the full version's price yet, but unless it's ludicrously expensive it'll probably be worth every penny.

the *info*

£FREE (Beta)

CONTACT: www.adobe.co.uk
PLATFORM: PC and Mac

91%

Apple *Aperture*

Now on version 1.5, Apple's Aperture application is aimed at professional photographers using Mac hardware (obviously) and offers a RAW workflow solution, though it can also deal with TIFF and JPEG files. The interface is cool and classy, as we expect from Apple, and is also customisable to suit your way of working. Overall the program offers a logical workflow for images, some useful cataloguing features and is non-destructive. It is not without its flaws, yet potentially it could be a useful tool – though its not insubstancial cost and hardware demands will put it out of the reach of many people.

the *info*

£219

CONTACT: www.apple.com/uk
PLATFORM: Mac only

85%

DxO Optics Pro ELITE
Automatic image quality enhancement & Raw conversion
3.0
The "must have" software accessory for your Digital-SLR
DXO

DXO *Optics Pro*

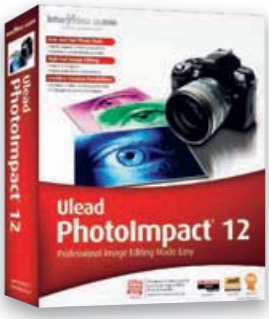
The DSLR owners' friend, DXO Optics Pro is a RAW processor, that can fix other problems such as noise, exposure, colour, white balance and so on. The software is modular and can be customised to suit your camera system. DXO Labs analyses individual lenses with camera bodies, recognises the optical characteristics of the lens and sensors and fixes (or replicates) them. These modules can then be downloaded and installed, and the software automatically knows which camera and lens was used. For photographers it's great. There's now no excuse for technically or optically bad images, and that makes this software essential.

the *info*

$79

CONTACT: www.dxo.com
PLATFORM: Mac and PC

92%



Ulead *PhotoImpact*

Ulead PhotoImpact is now in its 12th edition, and is powerful enough to be considered a serious rival to the two market leaders, despite costing less than half the price of Paint Shop Pro. The latest version boasts a huge list of improvements and enhancements, and is an extremely capable image-editing tool. It's not quite a match for Photoshop CS, but it is certainly superior in many ways to Photoshop Elements 3, and has several advantages over the latest version of Paint Shop Pro, not least the fact that it costs just £44.99 (downloadable edition) and has effective editing tools for most common editing needs.

the *info*

£44.99

CONTACT: www.ulead.co.uk
PLATFORM: PC only

90%

Extensis *Portfolio 8*

Extensis Portfolio builds a set of thumbnails from folders, disks or even your whole hard drive if you want it, which you can then save as catalogues. Since Portfolio 8 is a database-driven application, you can include keywords, metadata, dates and so on, as well as view EXIF information, all of which is searchable. Also built into the package is Portfolio Express, which allows you to quickly search without opening the whole program. While powerful, with some nice features and lots of power, Portfolio doesn't offer any photo-editing tools like iView, its main competitor, nor does it allow side-by-side comparisons of images.

the *info*

£199.95

CONTACT: www.extensive.com
PLATFORM: PC and Mac

86%

The Top 20 Accessories

From batteries to tripods, card cases to reflectors, here's our top accessory picks of the year

Lastolite
TriFlip

www.johnsons-photopia.co.uk

£85

If you're keen on portrait photography, then a reflector is a tool you really should have in your arsenal, and the TriFlip is the Swiss Army knife of reflectors. The kit is in three pieces – a basic collapsible frame with a white reflector diffuser, and two reversible slip-on covers offering a choice of reflectance. One has a black and white side for creating fill or shadow, with black and full gold if turned inside out. The other is silver and white, which reverses into a silver/gold mix when turned inside out. That gives you a choice of nine different options, which isn't bad when you think about the cost of individual reflectors. Furthermore, they all fold up neatly into a 14in bag. Like other Tri series products, the TriFlip has a built-in handle, making it easier for the solo photographer to position the reflector near the subject. For keen portraitists, this is a really useful and versatile reflector that offers a massive amount of lighting options for a reasonable price.

90%

Joby *Gorillapod SLR*

www.intro2020.co.uk **£40**

There are mini tripods and there's the Gorillapod. Now available for SLRs, this enlarged version has the same ball and socket flexible legs, allowing the unit to be wrapped around posts, tree branches or simply placed on a tabletop. It's lightweight, at 165g, so it won't overburden your camera bag, and has a quick-release plate so is fast to use in the field. It's tough too, being able to hold up to 1100g of camera and lens securely. This is an ideal gadget for placing your camera in normally inaccessible positions, and I'll admit it's quite addictive just trying out new places to put it.

84%

PNY *Attache Outdoor*

www.pny-europe.com **£37.50**

USB flash drives are useful to have for quickly transferring photos, and the latest 2GB drive from PNY could be one worth sticking in your laptop bag. Unlike most, it is an outdoor model, with a tough, rubberised casing for added protection. Using USB 2.0, it's quick enough to transfer files and the capacity is especially useful to DSLR owners. Our cultural attaché loves it.

84%

Giottos *8970 Carbon Fibre*

www.teamworkphoto.com **£40**

This monopod is a little unusual. Not only is it carbon fibre, but it also has a spring-loaded foot support at the base. By pulling down and standing on it, you add stability to your monopod and camera. The four-section leg extends up to 75in but collapses to just 24.7in. Like all Giottos monopods, the foot is a rubberised ball, allowing easy tilt. It also comes with a tool kit, a hex key, and a handy carry bag, making it an interesting spin on an otherwise uninspiring but essential photo tool.

86%

Gorillapod

www.intro2020.co.uk **£19.99**

For compact digicams, the humble mini tripod is a must, but they're limited to where you can use them. The Gorillapod breaks from the norm. Made from a series of connecting ball and sockets, the legs can be twisted and turned to adapt to uneven surfaces. Even better, the legs can be twisted around objects such as tree branches, fence posts or similar, to provide support in any unusual location. It even comes with a quick-release plate. I wouldn't recommend it with a large camera, it's small and lightweight, but that also makes it ideal for slipping in a coat pocket. A great idea, that's more than mere monkey business.

89%

Sigma

DG Circular Polariser

www.sigma-imaging.uk.com **£50**

Now that photographers have realised that some on-camera filter effects can't be replicated in Photoshop, the good old polariser is making a comeback. The DG range is designed specially for DSLRs, and features a special multi-layer coating on the glass to reduce flare and ghosting caused by the reflective characteristics of digital sensors. Most sizes are encased in an ultra-thin mount to minimise vignetting with wideangle lenses. These are excellent quality filters at a competitive price.

84%

Lowepro

PixelPak V2 Card Case

www.lowepro.com **£7.95**

With a push-button lock, Lowepro's case is made from ABS plastic with an aluminium front. It accepts up to four CF, or Sony MS and MS Duo cards, or a PCMIA adapter if one of the two rubber inserts is replaced. Cards are held securely in place by the fitted rubber inserts. The hard case is an essential.

85%

Tamrac

Adventure Messenger 1

www.intro2020.co.uk **£19**

This is a satchel-type bag able to hold an SLR body, a second lens and flash, or similar combination. The bag is more streamlined than most, looking like a messenger bag. The main section has tough internal dividers, while the front zip-up pocket can hold memory cards, notebooks or sandwiches. There's also a small pocket in the front flap and a back document pocket. This is also on a sleeved design, so it could slip securely over the handles of a wheeled suitcase. Finally, the bag has a phone pocket on the side. The strap also accepts Tamrac's Strap Accessories. A single clip buckle fastens the top flap, making it easy to open and access your gear, though I wouldn't call it the most secure or waterproof system. To sum up, this is an ideal bag for the city or lightweight traveller, without looking like a camera bag.

85%

Kata

W-92 Waist pack

www.kata-bags.com **£70**

Kata's W-92 is designed to be worn around the waist – either on the front for easy access or around the back to take weight off the shoulders and upper back. In use the W-92 feels comfortably secure and sits at an angle that gives free access to zips and pockets. A central main chamber is (just about) large enough to fit a consumer SLR and lens while two side drawstring pockets can store lenses, drinks and bulkier accessories. A rain cover and shoulder strap are provided. Measuring 42 x 25cm, the bag is a little bulky for smaller-framed photographers, but its durable design overcomes such complaints. Perfect for when you need to be mobile.

84%

Epson *V750 scanner*

www.epson.co.uk **£549**

The V750 is Epson's top-of-the-line scanner that produces excellent quality, print and film scans, covering all film formats from 35mm to 10x8in sheet film. It has dual lenses, one for High resolution scanning (4800ppi) and the other for Super resolution scanning (6400ppi). It has a High Pass Optics system for improved scanning speed and image quality, plus an Anti-Reflection Optical Coating to reduce reflection and ghosting. Faster scanning speeds are achieved with a high-reflection mirror that improves the reflection of the scanned light. The V750 is supplied with Adobe Photoshop Elements 3.0, the full version of SilverFast Ai6 and Monaco Ezcolor. The thing that makes it stand out is the optional Fluid Mount Accessory (FMA). The FMA enables you to wet mount large and medium format film for perfectly flat film scans. The holder is a well-built item but, unlike the other Epson film holders, it has no height adjusters. On close inspection of the sample pictures, the wet scan displays image detail better than the dry scan while helping to hide film grain, dust, Newton rings and small scratches, but can also highlight air bubbles that have not been fully squeezed out.

92%

Premierlight
PL-7

www.premierlight.co.uk **£40**

If you're a keen landscape photographer, you probably get up at the 'crack-o-sparras', wander through muddy fields in pitch black and wait for the light. So you need a torch. The Premierlight PL-7 could mount a challenge to the Maglite supremacy. These high-grade aluminium torches offer even LED illumination, with a central red LED for providing illumination without disturbing animals. If you get into trouble the white LEDs can be set to send an SOS signal out, with a claimed 2 mile visibility. Supplied with a belt holster, it's compact and tough, and battery life seems very long.

85%

Lastolite
Tri-Balance Reflector

www.johnsons-photopia.co.uk **£40**

Lastolite's Tri-Grip reflector range addresses the problem of holding a reflector while shooting. Triangular rather than round, they have a neat handle for one-handed operation, while still folding up small. They aren't new, but this variation is. On one side is a standard silver reflector, ideal for filling in shadows on faces and so forth, but the other side is divided into three equal black, white and mid-grey segments. By including the tri-balance in a test shot you have an automatic black, white and mid-point with which to adjust your Levels in Photoshop. You can then batch process the rest of your shoot to these settings.

86%

Delkin
Pop-Up Shade

www.delkin.com **£18**

We're all aware of the problems of using LCD shades in bright sun, and as fewer cameras have an optical viewfinder, this problem is increasing. An LCD shade is becoming the accesory du jour, therefore, and this one, in a variety of sizes, from Delkin is as good as any, especially for compacts. The shade simply sticks onto your LCD's surround and folds down when not in use, providing protection too. Practically essential.

87%

Lowepro
Rolling CompuTrekker AW

www.lowepro.co.uk **£249**

Lowepro has come to the rescue of twisted vertebrae with what is essentially a backpack, with space for a comprehensive camera system of a couple of bodies, a clutch of lenses and a flash gun or two. There's also a front pocket for a laptop, including a take-out laptop sleeve and shoulder strap. Plus there's the usual array of pockets for memory cards, filters and so on, and even an orange-coloured pouch for cable management – orange being Lowepro's code for 'digital'. The bag has plenty of padding for the back and nice, wide shoulder straps. There are bungee cords for tripods or monopods and a top grab handle plus a pair of wheels and a long, retractable handle enabling the bag to be easily wheeled around town or airport. Unfortunately, this also makes the bag heavy when carrying, so ironically the inclusion of the wheels make the very same wheels a necessity!

84%

Sony Ericsson *800i*

www.sonyericcson.co.uk **£SUBJECT TO CONTRACT**

Sony's K800i is the first phone bestowed with its Cyber-shot camera brand. It's a great-looking phone, with good ergonomics and a menu system that makes sense. It has an MP3 player, FM radio and some slick-looking games. But it's the K800i's functionality as a 3MP camera that we're interested in. To perform the magic transformation from phone to camera you simply turn it 90° and slide down the lens cover on the back. There's a shutter button on what is now the top so it handles just like a proper camera. It even has a flash. The settings button accesses a range of icon-based controls, including focus, metering and white balance. There's a panorama mode which stitches up to three frames, BestPic mode (which takes nine shots virtually simultaneously and lets you choose the best one) and a selection of fun frames, where you can superimpose a face into a selection of templates, including Elvis and a white rabbit. Once the shot is taken, there are a few basic on-board editing features. Sure you can see the compression, and there's visible fringing in high-contrast shots, but the overall quality is pretty reasonable for what they are. As a camera phone it's the best I've tried.

83%

Ray *D8*

www.johnsons-photopia.co.uk **£230**

Tungsten lights have traditionally been a low-cost entry into the world of possibilites presented by studio lighting. But, unless you use black and white film, they can be bit of a pain to use with colour film. This is because tungsten has a much higher colour temperature than daylight, so produces a yellow cast on film. With the advent of digital SLRs though, and the ability to accurately adjust the colour temperature in camera, or later in RAW (though it's always best to get it right in-camera), tungsten lighting could soon become popular again. Another advantage of tungsten over flash is that the continuous light allows you to see precisely where the light is falling and the shadows are appearing. This kit from Lastolite has everything you need to set up a simple home studio, with two lights and reflectors, brollies and stands. The heads offer a 500W output, which can get hot for models sitting under direct lighting for an extended length of time, but they're more comfortable if the umbrellas are used. The lamps are well made, with a robust metal casing.

85%

Energizer *Battery Charger*

www.energizer.co.uk **£29.99**

Small enough to fit comfortably in the hand, Energizer's latest model is completely wireless and charges four cells in around seven hours. It's not the smallest model on the market, but its wireless convenience and compatibility with both AA and AAA cells means it's still a winner in our book.

90%

Lowepro *CompuDayPack*

www.lowepro.com **£80**

Lowepro's colourful new CompuDayPack is designed to carry a small SLR system, a laptop and anything else you might need on a day's shoot. Divided into three sections – camera, computer and other – the bag is comfortable and well made, with good lumbar support and even weight distribution. The main compartment has pockets for cables and pens and so on, while a front pocket will hold an iPod and has a rubberised headphone hole. This is a good all-round bag but it lacks some features such as a tripod holder and bungee cords.

87%

SanDisk *Extreme IV Bundle*

www.sandisk.com **£200**

Extreme IV is the proud claimant to the title of the world's fastest card. Offering read-and-write speeds of 40MB/sec, most people would never see the speed advantage, unless you're one of the few users of the super-expensive medium format digital cameras. The larger file size of these cameras needs a fast card to buffer the information, especially in high-turnover fashion photography, for example. The Extreme moniker also comes into play with the card's reliability in extreme conditions (see what they did there?) of -25°C to 85°C. Basically, this card could survive the Arctic or the Sahara – and still bring your pictures safely home. SanDisk is offering a bundle pack, which includes a 4GB card and Extreme Card Reader, which allows fast reading of the card. Excellent performance, but it does comes at a certain price.

90%

Hoodman *Flip-up LCD Cap*

www.hoodmanusa.com **£18**

Have you ever been out and about in the summer and seen photographers with their heads under their jackets trying to glean what's happening on their camera's LCD monitors? The Hoodman LCD hood is a simple and effective solution to this scenario. Available for several SLR models, the flip-up hood attaches to the rubber protector groove of the viewfinder, getting rid of the need for the glue or Velcro of similar systems. The three-part folding hood shades the LCD from sunlight and folds down easily in order to allow you to use the viewfinder. In addition, the hood protects the LCD from nose grease, scratches and other dangers.

88%

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This course teaches you the key skills you need to replace the mini-lab, which used to process and print your film, with a computer. You learn how to get the most from your digital sensor and then what tools to use to make your pictures look their best. We deal with contrast and colour correction, sharpening, cropping, straightening, white balance, a bit of dusting and converting to black and white, plus toning and saving & archiving. On completion, you will have a good grounding in digital imaging and be able to produce excellent digital images.

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photographers!

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D2X BODY ONLY £2499 or £100 mth

SENSOR CLEANING EQUIPMENT

GREEN CLEAN KITS from £32.50
VISIBLE DUST BUNDLES from £199.99
SEE PAGE 9 FOR MORE DETAILS

D2Hs 4.1 million pixels

D2Hs combines impressive speed, response, resolution and handling

For action and sports photographers the D2Hs delivers a winning combination of speed, image quality and workflow efficiency. This camera is capable of shooting at 8 fps for up to 50 shots (JPEG) and features the latest advances of the ground-breaking D2X.

D2Hs BODY ONLY £1998 or £83 mth

D200 10.2 million pixels

The D200 bridges the gap between the amateur and professional for only £899

The D200 delivers incomparable quality of professional pictures whilst offering exceptional versatility, creative responsiveness, accuracy and full manual control. The perfect camera for the semi-professional and freelancer who want an affordable SLR.

D200 BODY ONLY £895 or £40 mth

D200 BODY + AF-S 18-70mm f/3.5-4.5G IF-ED DX £1069 or £48 mth

Nikon D80 10.7 million pixels

High resolution and sharp detail the D80 is the perfect gift from only £548

The D80 features a 10.2 effective megapixel DX Format CCD image sensor, providing a new level of high resolution and sharp detail. With this, however, also comes the freedom to crop images more creatively and print impressive enlargements. With a start up time of just 0.18 seconds and a shutter minimal release lag time of approx. 80 milliseconds, the D80 delivers instant response. Continuous shooting at a rapid 3 frames per second, in bursts of up to 100 JPEG images makes action photography a reality.

Sensor:	CCD - 10.7 Million pixels
Image	Size: 3872 x 2592 pixels
Focus:	Advanced TTL Auto/Manual
Exposure:	Auto/AP/SP/M
Metering:	3D Matrix/CW/Spot
Monitor:	2.5 " TFT LCD
Other Features:	3fps for 100 shots
Storage:	SD Card
Video Output:	Yes

D80 BODY ONLY £548 or £23mth

D80 BODY + AF-S DX 18-70 £718 or £30mth

D80 BODY + AF 18-135 f/3.5-4.5D £767 or £32mth

FLASH GUNS

SB-600 SB-800 SB-R200

TTL Flash Units

Nikon SB-23	£125	Nikon SB-600	£205
Nikon SB-225	£129	Nikon SB-800	£269
Nikon SB27	£179		

SEE PX FOR METZ FLASH

NIKON Wireless Speedlites and Kits

Nikon SB-R200	£169.99
Nikon SB-R1	£379.99
Nikon SB-R1C1	£549.99

AF LENSES

AF-S 300mm F4 — £865 or £37 per month

AF-S 300/400/500/600mm — NEW Lightweight models

AF DX 12-24mm — £709 or £30 per month

AF 80-200mm F2.8D ED — £799 or £34 per month

AF DX Fisheye 10.5mm F2.8 ED	£459	or £21 mth	AF 200mm F4 IF ED Micro	£999	or £44 mth
AF 14mm F2.8 D	£995	or £46 mth	AF DX 12-24mm		
AF 16mm F2.8 Fisheye	£499	or £23 mth	(for digital cameras only)	£705	or £30 mth
AF 18mm F2.8 D	£1145	or £48 mth	AF-S 17-35mm F2.8	£1120	or £48 mth
AF 20mm F2.8 D	£445	or £21 mth	AF-S DX 17-55mm F2.8	£899	or £39 mth
AF 24mm F2.8 D	£305	or £13 mth	AF 18-35mm F3.5-4.5 D	£319	or £14 mth
AF 28mm F2.8 D	£185	or £8 mth	AF-S DX 18-55mm F3.5-5.6G IF ED	£169	or £8 mth
AF 50mm F1.8 D	£95	or £8 mth	AF-S DX 18-70mm F3.5-4.5G	£179	or £9 mth
AF 50mm F1.4 D	£212	or £10 mth	AF-S DX VR 18-200mm F3.5-5.6G	£489	or £21 mth
AF 85mm F1.4 D IF	£759	or £33 mth	AF 24-50mm F2.8-4 DIF	£355	or £14 mth
AF 85mm F1.8 D	£295	or £14 mth	AF 24-85mm F2.8-4 DIF	£425	or £19 mth
AF 105mm F2 D DC	£699	or £30 mth	AF-S VRG 24-120mm F3.5-5.6 IF ED	£415	or £18 mth
AF 135mm F2 D DC	£869	or £38 mth	AF-S 28-70mm F2.8 D	£1125	or £47 mth
AF 180mm F2.8 D IF ED	£549	or £24 mth	AF 28-100mm F3.5-5.6	£129	
AF-S VR 200mm F2	£3095	or £109mth	AF-DG 28-200mm F3.5-5.6 AF, DH	£179	or £8 mth
AF-S VR 300mm F2.8	£3179	or £134mth	AF 35-70mm F2.8 D	£492	or £22 mth
AF-S 300mm F4 IF ED	£849	or £37 mth	AF 55-200mm F4-5.6 ED Black	£149	
AF-SII 300mm F2.8	£2978	or £124mth	AF 70-200mm VR AFS-G2.8	£1149	or £50 mth
AF-SII 400mm F2.8	£5965	or £250mth	AF-S VR 70mm-300mm	£399	or £17 mth
AF-SII 500mm F4	£4949	or £208mth	AF 80-200mm F2.8D ED+CL-43A	£749	or £34 mth
AF-SII 600mm F4	£6260	or £264mth	AF VR 80-400mm F4.5-5.6 DED	£999	or £42 mth
AF 60mm F2.8 DMicro	£328	or £15 mth	AF-S VR 200mm-400mm F4G IF-ED	£3995	or £180mth
AF 85mm F2.8PC Micro shift	£1095	or £46 mth	AF 18-135mm	£825	pre order
AF-SVR 105mm F2.8 Micro	£529	or £23 mth			

NEW LENSES

- AF-VR 80-400mm
- AAF-S VR 200-400mm
- AF-S DX 18-135
- AS-S 70-300 VR

See website for Details

CONVERTERS

AF-S TC-17EII	£289
AF-S TC-14EII	£325
AF-S TC-20EII	£289

EXTENSION TUBES

8mm	£69
14mm	£89
27.7mm	£95

WIRELESS FILE TRANSMITTERS

- USB 2.0 port connection
- Transfer images directly to any IEEE 802.11b compatible access point
- Doesn't restrict movement

WT-1 Wireless Transmitter £379.99

- IEEE 802.11b/g support for: faster speeds, network protcols and greater security options (req. Nikon Capture 4.2 or higher)

WT-2 Wireless Transmitter £599.99

FILTERS prices start from…

Circular Polarizing	£75.99	L1BC Skylight	£30.99	ND4S Neutral Density	£27.99	X0 Green	£27.99
A12 Amber	£27.99	L37C UV	£27.99	ND8S Neutral Density	£27.99	X1 Green	£27.99
A2 Amber	£27.99	L39 UV	£27.99	O56 Orange	£27.99	Y44 Yellow	£27.99
B12 Blue	£27.99	Neutral Colour	£21.99	R60 Red	£27.99	Y48 Yellow	£27.99
B2 Blue	£27.99	ND400 Neutral		SOFT No.1	£79.99	Y52 Yellow	£27.99
B8 Blue	£27.99	Density	£27.99	SOFT No.2	£79.99	C-PL1L Drop-in Circular	£179.99

COMPATIBLE MEMORY CARDS

SanDisk

NEW Extreme IV	From £86.99-£345.99
CompactFlash	From £9.99-£78.99
Extreme III CompactFlash	From £29.99-£219.99
Ultra II CompactFlash	From £19.99-£173.99

Kingston

CompactFlash	From £15.99
Elite-Pro CompactFlash	From £22.99-£79.99
NEW CF Ultimate	From £34.99-£134.99

Lexar

CompactFlash 133x Pro	From £34.99-£139.99

Full range of Nikon compatible accessories please visit our website

DIGITAL SLR ACCESSORIES

D80	CF-D80	EN-EL3e	HL-EL3e	MH-18	MH-19	EH-5	SC-28	ML-L3	MC-DC1	BM-5	AS-15	MB-D80	DR-6	DG-2	Correction Lens	UC-E4	EG-D100
	£34.99	£49.99	£36.99	£34.99	£199.99	£74.99	£49.99	£14.99	£29.99	£6.99	£18.99	£149.99	£199.99	£77.99	£12.99	£15.99	£15.99
D200	EN-EL3e	MB-D200	MS-D200	EH-6	MH-18A	MH-19	CF-D200	BM-6	DK-21	DK-21M	DG-2	DK-7	DR-6	DK-5	MC-35	MC-36	SC-28
	£49.99	£149.00	£19.99	£74.99	£34.99	£199.99	£49.99	£6.99	£3.99	£19.99	£77.99	£5.99	£199.99	£3.99	£99.99	£119.99	£49.99
D2Hs	EN-EL4	MH-21	EH-6	HL-EL4	BL-1	BL-2	WT-1 SET	WT-2	WA-E1	WA-S1	DG-2	DR-5	MC-30	MSV-01	Correction Lens	BM-3	SC-28
	£89.99	£129.99	£74.99	£59.99	£14.99	£16.99	£379.99	£599.99	£129.99	£44.99	£77.99	£199.99	£55.99	£199.99	£12.99	£6.99	£49.99
D2Xs	EN-EL4	MH-21	EH-6	HL-EL4	BL-1	BL-2	WT-2	WA-E1	WA-S1	B Focus Screen	E Focus Screen	V Focus Screen	DK-17A	Correction Lens	MC-35	ML-3	SC-28
	£89.99	£129.99	£74.99	£59.99	£14.99	£16.99	£599.99	£129.99	£44.99	£24.99	£19.99	£29.99	£19.99	£12.99	£99.99	£189.99	£49.99
D2X	EN-EL4	MH-21	EH-6	HL-EL4	BL-1	BL-2	WT-2	WA-E1	WA-S1	B Focus Screen	E Focus Screen	V Focus Screen	DK-17A	Correction Lens	MC-35	ML-3	SC-28
	£89.99	£129.99	£74.99	£59.99	£14.99	£16.99	£599.99	£129.99	£44.99	£24.99	£19.99	£29.99	£19.99	£12.99	£99.99	£189.99	£49.99

For latest prices and all accessories – see online

SPREAD THE COST OF PAYMENT Visit – www.warehouseexpress.com

DSLR Cameras and Canon

Canon EOS 400D

10.1 million pixels

The 400D – optimum performance with the ability to minimise dust – from £461!

With a broad array of functions designed to deliver optimal performance in a compact chassis, the EOS 400D Digital offers advanced features for precision shooting and ease of use. The EOS 400D is the first camera to incorporate the EOS Integrated Cleaning System. Based on significant research into the causes of dust in D-SLR cameras, the system combats dust in three important ways: Reduce, Repel and Remove.

Sensor:	CMOS - 10.1 Million pixels
Image Size:	3888 x 2592 pixels
Lens:	Canon EF mount
Focus:	TTL 9 point focusing/Manual
Exposure:	Auto/Program/AP/SP/M
Metering:	35 Zone Eval/CW/Partial
Monitor:	2.5" TFT
Other Features:	EOS Integrated Cleaning System
Storage:	CompactFlash I/II

EOS 400D BODY ONLY	£459 or £20mth
EOS 400D BODY + EF-S 18-55 f/3.5-5.6	£494 or £21mth

30D an Award winning 8.2 MP from just £743 – Saving up to £300 on r.r.p.

Realise your photographic vision with the EOS 30D. Speed and precision in a tough magnesium alloy body.

30D BODY ONLY	£738 or £31mth
30D + EF-S 18-55 f/3.5-5.6 + Extreme III 2GB CF	£787 or £33mth
30D + EF-S 17-85 f/2.8 USM	£1054 or £44mth

SPECIAL OFFER Up to £105 cashback on accessories when you buy a 350D, 400D, 30D or 5D SEE OUR WEBSITE

Canon EOS 30D

8.2 million pixels

Canon EOS 5D

13.3 million pixels

5D TIPA Awards 'Best D-SLR professional camera' now at a superb price!

With no cropping or magnification effect, the EOS 5D's 12.8 MP full frame CMOS sensor offers full freedom of expression. Subtle tonal gradations are reproduced in shadow, midtone and highlights.

5D BODY ONLY	£1699 or £71 mth
5D + EF-S 24-105 mm USM 'A' Range	£2250 or £94 mth

Canon EOS-1D Mark II N

17.2 million pixels

1Ds mk II – Outstanding colour rendition

Powered by Canon's second generation DIGIC II image processor and capable of firing at 4 fps for bursts of up to 32 frames in JPEG, or 11 frames in RAW. Featuring a full-frame 36 x 24mm 16.7 Megapixel CMOS sensor, the EOS-1Ds Mark II produces images with outstanding colour rendition and dynamic range. It has sufficient resolution to produce files which convert to 50MB uncompressed TIFF at 24 bit colour depth

1Ds Mark II BODY ONLY	£4495 or £188 mth

Canon EOS-1D Mark II N

13.3 million pixels

The professionals choice of Canon - the 1D Series now from only £2199

The 13.3 MP EOS-1D Mark II N is the essential tool of sports & reportage photographers. With pack leading image quality at 8.5 frames per second and 48 frame JPEG burst performance. Canon's 8.2 MP CMOS sensor, the EOS-1D Mark II N has all the sensitivity necessary to bring out contrast and subtle detail in dark shadows and highlights.

1D Mark II N BODY ONLY	£2199 or £92 mth

Canon EF LENSES

MP-E 65mm f2.8 1-5x Macro	£714 or £30 mth	EF28-90mm f4-5.6 III	£93		
EF85mm f1.2 L II USM NEW	£1299or £50 mth	EF24-105mm USM 'A' Range	£147		
EF85mm f1.8 U	£264 or £12 mth	EF28-105mm f3.5-4.5 USM II	£179 or £8 mth		
EF100mm f2.0	£310 or £13 mth	EF28-135mm f3.5-5.6 Image Stabiliser	£318 or £14 mth		
EF100mm f2.8 U Macro	£369 or £16 mth	EF28-200mm f3.5-5.6USM	£269 or £14 mth		
EF135mm f2.0 L	£699 or £30 mth	EF28-300mm f3.5-5.6 L IS USM	£1520or £66 mth		
EF135mm f2.8	£279 or £12 mth	EF55-200mm f4.5-5.6 II USM	£179 or £8 mth		
EF180mm f3.5 L Macro	£1019or £43 mth	EF70-200mm f4.0L	£478 or £20 mth		
EF200mm f2.8 LII/2	£510 or £22 mth	EF70-200mm f2.8LIS	£1249or £54 mth		
EF300mm f2.8 L Image Stabiliser	£3099or £130 mth	EF70-200mm f4.0L IS USM	£990 Pre-order		
EF300mm f4.0 LU Image Stabiliser	£1079or £45 mth	EF70-300mm f4-5.6 IS USM	£369 or £34 mth		
EF400mm f2.8 LII/2 Image Stabiliser	£5199or £220 mth	EF70-300mm f4.5-5.6 DO IS USM	£799 or £34 mth		
EF400mm f4 DOISU	£3849or £164 mth	EF75-300mm f4.0-5.6 U/3	£129 or £8 mth		
EF400mm f5.6 LU	£839 or £36 mth	EF90-300mm	£115		
EF500mm f4.0 L Image Stabiliser	£4299or £184 mth	EF90-300mm USM	£149		
EF600mm f4.0 L Image Stabiliser	£5790or £245 mth	EF100-400 Image Stabiliser	£1050or £45mth		
EF16-35mm f2.8 LUSM	£989 or £42 mth				
EF-S10-22mm f3.5-4.5 USM - for 20D & 300D	£475 or £21 mth				
EF17-40mm f4.0 L USM	£503 or £23 mth				
EF17-55mm f2.8 IS USM NEW	£699 or £30 mth				
EF-S17-85mm f4.0-5.6 IS USM - for 20D & 300D	£395 or £17 mth				
EF20-35mm f3.5-4.5USM	£269 or £12 mth				
EF24-85mm f3.5-4.5U	£230 or £11 mth				
EF24-70mm f2.8L	£849 or £37 mth				

EF14mm f2.8 L	£1399or £61 mth
EF15mm f2.8	£459 or £20 mth
EF20mm f2.8 U	£329 or £14 mth
EF24mm f1.4	£898 or £38 mth
EF24mm f2.8	£309 or £13 mth
EF28mm f1.8 U	£319 or £14 mth
EF28mm f2.8	£134
EF35mm f1.4 L	£900 or £39 mth
EF35mm f2.0	£179 or £9 mth
EF50mm f1.4U	£239 or £10 mth
EF50mm f1.8	£69 or £8 mth
EF50mm f1.2 USM	£1149.99pre-order
EF50mm f2.5 Macro	£195 or £9 mth
EF-S60mm f2.8 Macro	£270 or £12 mth

Canon CONVERTERS

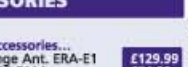
12mm	£69
25mm	£109
EF 1.4XII	£229
EF 2XR	£229

EF300mm f2.8 L Image Stabiliser £3099 or £130 per month

EF100-400mm LU Img. Stabiliser £1079 or £45 per month

EF300mm f4.0 LU Img. Stabiliser £1079 or £45 per month

EF400mm f5.6 LU Img. Stabiliser £859 or £36 per month



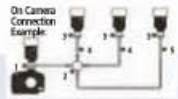
Canon FLASH GUNS

220 EX	£113	MR14 EX Macrolite	£329
430 EX Speedlite	£169	MT-24 EX Macrolite	
580 EX Speedlite	£289	Twin Lite Flash	£589

Canon MULTIPLE FLASH SET UP

ON CAMERA ACCESSORIES:

1. TTL Hot Shoe Adaptor 3	£55.95
2. TTL Distributor	£39.95
3. Off Camera Shoe Adaptor	£19.95
4. Connection Cord 0.6m length	£38.95
5. Connection Cord 3m length	£40.95



OFF CAMERA ACCESSORIES:

6. Off Shoe Cord	£40.50
7. L Bracket SB-E1	£119.99

Canon FILTERS prices start from...

UV Filter £12.49

Skylight	£12.49
Regular	£20.99
ND 4L Neutral Density	£25.99
ND 8L Neutral Density	£27.99
Circular Polarizing	£79.99
Softmat 1 Soft Focus	£60.99

Canon WIRELESS FILE TRANSMITTER & ACCESSORIES

- Compatible w/EOS 1Ds Mk II, EOS-1D Mark II, EOS and the EOS 5D
- Transfer images directly from camera thru wireless or Ethernet-based LAN system to an FTP server.

WFT-E1 Wireless Transmitter £699

More accessories...

Ext. Range Ant. ERA-E1	£129.99
Canon BP-511A	£54.99
Canon CB-5L Charger for BP-511A	£39.99

Canon DIGITAL SLR ACCESSORIES

EOS 400D	ACK-DC20	EH-18L	BG-E3	NB-2LH	CB-21WE	CBC-NB2	RS-60E3	RC-1	Angle Finder C	EP-EX15	ERA-E1	CUP-E1	Selphy Printers
	£45.00	£34.99	£119.99	£45.00	£39.00	£65	£23.99	£17.99	£149.99	£17.49	£109.00	£6.90	FROM £99
EOS 30D	BP 511A	CB-5L	CA-PS400	CG-570	BG-E2	BGM-E2	CR-560	CSEH-17L	RS-80N3	TC-80N3	LC-5	Angle Finder C	EP-EX15	WFT-E1	ERA-E1	Selphy Printers
	£54.99	£39.99	£75.00	£35.00	£149.99	£15.99	£89.99	£29.99	£39.99	£99.99	£19.99	£149.99	£17.49	£699.00	£109.00	FROM £99
EOS 5D	BP-511	CB-5L	BG-E4	Ee-A	Ee-D	Ee-5	CR-560	RS-80N3	TC-80N3	Angle Finder C	WFT-E1	ERA-E1	NEW See on-line	Selphy Printers
	£54.99	£39.99	£150	£25.99	£25.99	£25.99	£89.99	£39.99	£99.99	£149.99	£699.00	£109.00		FROM £99
EOS-1D Mark II N	NP-E3NI-MH	HP-E3	NC-E2	DC-E1	WFT-E1	ERA-E1	DVK-E2	IFC-200D44	IFC-450D44	LS	AngleFinderC	RS-80N3	TC-80N3	Focusing Screens	Diopter Lenses	NEW models on our website	Selphy Printers
	£99.99	£69.99	£239.99	£79.99	£699.00	£109.00	£599.99	£39.99	£49.99	£19.99	£149.99	£39.99	£99.99	from £25.91	£8.58		FROM £99
EOS-1D Mark II	NP-E3NI-MH	HP-E3	NC-E2	DC-E1	WFT-E1	ERA-E1	DVK-E2	IFC-200D44	IFC-450D44	LS	AngleFinderC	TC-80N3	TC-80N3	Focusing Screens	Diopter Lenses	NEW models on our website	Selphy Printers
	£99.99	£69.99	£249.99	£79.99	£699.00	£109.00	£699.99	£39.99	£49.99	£19.99	£149.99	£39.99	£99.99	£8.58	£99.99		FROM £99

OTHER BRANDS STOCKED ONLINE

FUJIFILM · SONY · SIGMA · OLYMPUS · ZIGVIEW · Metz · PENTAX · VisibleDust

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www.warehouseexpress.com

Under £100

Pixel precision, on a budget!
- 5.3 Million pixels
- 2592 x 1944 pixels image size
- 35-105mm f2.8 - 4.9
- 2.4" TFT LCD Monitor
- Movie Mode: Yes
- 20MB Internal, Requires: SD Card
- Batteries: 2 x AA (included) or CRV3 battery

SAMSUNG Digimax S500 £89

Easily captures the perfect shot – Every time.
- 4.1 Million pixels
- 2304 x 1728 pixels
- 38-114mm f3.3-5.5 (3x zoom)
- 1.8" TFT LCD Monitor
- Movie Mode: Yes with sound
- Requires: xD-Picture Card
- Batteries: 2 x AA (included)

FUJIFILM FinePix A400 £75

Amazing value on a 6.2 mega pixel camera, only £95
- 6.2 Million pixels
- 2816 x 2112 pixels
- 38-114mm f3.1-5.9
- 2.5" TFT LCD Monitor
- Movie Mode: Yes
- 10MB Internal, Requires: xD Card
- Batteries: 2 x AA (included)

OLYMPUS Compact FE-170 £95

A wealth of features for £95!
- 4.23 Million pixels
- 2272 x 1704 pixels
- 38-114mm f2.8/4.9 (3x zoom)
- 2.0" TFT LCD Monitor
- Advanced Red-eye Reduction & Best Shot Selector
- 10MB of internal, Req: SD Card
- Batteries: 2 x AA Batteries (incl.)

NIKON Coolpix L4 £95

Brings joy of photography to budding photographers in an easy-to-use package.
- 6.36 Million pixels
- 2816 x 2112 pixels
- 34-102mm f2.8-4.8 (3x zoom)
- TTL Auto/Manual - 6cm Macros
- Metering: CW, Spot
- 2.4" Color TFT LCD monitor
- Movie Mode: Yes
- Storage: 13MB Built-in SD Card
- Batteries: 2x AA
- Video Output: Yes
- Transfer: USB

PENTAX Optio E20 £99

A perfect first digital camera at an exceptionally low price of £95 and...
- 4.0 Million pixels
- 2272 x 1704 pixels
- 39-156mm - f2.8-5.8 (4x zoom)
- 1.8" P-Si TFT Monitor
- Movie Mode: Yes
- Requires: SD Card
- Batteries: 2x AA (included)
- 2 colours available - Gold and Grey

...add this Canon Selphy Printer for £54 extra!
- 6"x4" Prints in under 60 Seconds
- PictBridge compatible
- Quick and easy to use
- Multiple paper sizes
- Windows and Mac supported (software supplied)
- USB Transfer

CANON Powershot A430 £89 | **CANON Powershot A430 + Sepihy CP720 Printer** £149

From £100-£150

• 35-140mm • 3x zoom

CANON Powershot A530 £109

• 38-102mm • 3x zoom

OLYMPUS Compact FE-180 £119

• 37-111mm • 5x zoom

KODAK Easyshare C533 £119

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• 38-114mm • 3x zoom

SONY Cybershot DSC W30 £129

•38-116mm •3x zoom

NIKON Coolpix L2 £139

Shoot and review images easily with this 7.3 Megapixel camera from FujiFilm

FUJIFILM

- Sensor: CCD - 7.3 Million pixels
- Image Size: 3072x2304 pixels
- Lens: 36-108mm f2.8-5.2 (3x zoom)
- Focus: Autofocus - 10cm Macro
- Exposure: Program AE
- Metering: 64-zone TTL
- Monitor: 2.4 " TFT LCD
- Movie Mode: Yes with sound
- Storage: xD-Picture Card
- Batteries: 2 x AA
- AC Adaptor: Optional
- Video Output: Yes
- Size/Weight: 93 x 60 x 30mm - 145g
- Transfer: USB 2.0 (Mac & PC

5.1 million pixels

FUJIFILM FinePix A700 £125

From £150-£200

•38-114mm •5x zoom

KODAK Easyshare C875 £169 or £8 mth

• 36-108mm • 3x zoom

FUJIFILM FinePix Z1 £179 or £8 mth

• 38-114mm • 3x zoom

SONY Cybershot W70 £164 or £8 mth

• 36-108mm • 3x zoom

FUJIFILM FinePix F-30 £189 or £9 mth

• 35-105mm • 3x zoom

CANON Ixus 60 £169 or £8 mth

• 38-114mm • 3x zoom

NIKON Coolpix S9 £179 or £8 mth

A feature laden 6.4 Million pixel compact camera from Olympus only £169!

OLYMPUS

- 6.4 Million pixels
- 2816 x 2112 Pixels
- 28-140mm f3.3-4.8
- TTL Autofocus - 5cm Macro
- EProgram AE / 10 Scene
- ESP
- 2.5" TFT LCD Monitor
- Other Features: PictBridge Support
- Movie Mode: Yes
- 24MB Internal Requires: xD Card
- Batteries: Lith-Ion
- Video Output: Yes
- Transfer: USB

6.4 million pixels

OLYMPUS FE-200 £169

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SONY Cybershot T10 — £216 or £10 mth

Double Anti-blur technology make blurred images a thing of the past

- 7.2 Million pixels
- 3072 x 2304 pixels
- 38-114mm f3.5-10 (3X zoom)
- 5 Area Multi-Point AF
- Program AE / 9 modes
- Multi-Pattern/Center/Spot
- 2.5" TFT LCD Monitor
- Movie Mode: Yes
- Internal Memory: 56MB
- Storage: Memory Stick Duo/Pro Duo Media
- Batteries: InfoLithium Rechargeable
- Video Output: Yes

PENTAX Optio T20 — £200 or £10 mth

- 39-113mm
- 3x zoom

OLYMPUS µ[mju:] 740 — £219 or £10 mth

- 36-180mm
- 5x zoom

OLYMPUS µ[mju:] 1000 — £240 or £11 mth

- 35-105mm
- 3x zoom

SAMSUNG Digimax L85 — £249 or £11 mth

CANON Ixus i7 Zoom — £249 or £11 mth

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- 2.4x zoom

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NIKON Coolpix S7c — £269 or £12 mth

True to life colour with no cmaera shake!

- 7.1 Million pixels
- 3072 x 2304 pixels
- 35-105mm f2.8-5.0 (3x zoom)
- Auto Face Priority 4cm Macro
- Auto/11 Scene
- 256 segment Matrix linked to AF area metering
- 3.0" TFT LCD Monitor
- Other Features: Red-eye Reduction, Vibration Reduction and Pictmotion
- Movie Mode: Yes
- Internal Memory: 14MB
- Storage: SD Cards
- Batteries: Li-ion rechargeable
- AC Adaptor: Included
- Video Output: Yes
- Transfer: USB, IEEE 802.11b/g

OLYMPUS µ[mju:] 725 SW — £259 or £11 mth

- 38-114mm
- 3x zoom

CANON IXUS 850Is — £264 or £11 mth

- 28-105mm
- 3.8x zoom

CANON IXUS 900Ti — £299 or £13 mth

- 37-111mm
- 3x zoom

KODAK Easyshare P880 — £299 or £13 mth

- 24-140mm
- 5.8x zoom

CANON Powershot S3 IS — £299 or £13 mth

- 36-432mm
- 12x zoom

GorillaPod Tripod £19.99

From £300-£599

LEICA C-LUX 1 — £359 or £17 mth

Retro style with up-to-the-minute technology...

- 6.37 Million pixels
- 2816x2112 pixels image size
- 28-102mm ASPH Lens.
- TTL Auto - 5cm Macro
- Auto/Auto Program Exposure
- Multi-field metering
- 2.5" TFT LCD Monitor
- Movie Mode: Yes
- Storage: SD Card
- Batteries: Lithium-ion 1150mAh 3.7v
- AC Adaptor: Included
- Video Output: Yes
- Transfer : USB 2.0

KODAK (Schneider) V610 — £315 or £11 mth

The world's smallest 10x optical zoom digital camera from Kodak

Kodak new

- 6.1 Million pixels
- 2848 x 2144 pixels image size
- Lens1: 38-114mm f3.9-4.4
- Lens2: 130-380mm f4.8
- Auto - 5cm to infinity focus
- TTL, Multi pattern/CW/Spot Metering
- 2.8" LCD Monitor
- Movie Mode: MPEG-4 with audio
- Storage: 32MB internal, Req: SD Cards
- Batteries: Li-ion Battery
- AC Adaptor: Included
- Video Output: Yes
- Transfer : USB 2.0 / Bluetooth

SONY Cyber-shot DSC-N2 — £319 or £11 mth

Shoot, save, search and share up to 500 VGA photos with the 10.1 megapixel DSC-N2

SONY new

- 10.1 Million Pixels
- 3648 x 2736 pixels mage size
- Lens: 38-114mm f2.8-5.4 (3x zoom)
- Focus: 5 Area Multi-Point, Centre Selectable
- Exposure: Program AE/Scene modes
- Multi-Pattern/CW/S metering
- 3.0" TFT LCD monitor
- Movie Mode: Yes
- Storage: 25MB Built In, Memory Stick Duo, Duo Pro
- Batteries: Li-ion
- Video Output: Yes
- Transfer: USB 2.0

FUJIFILM FinePix S9600 — £349 or £17 mth

Super quality & noise reduction

- 9.0 Million pixels– 3488x2616 pixels
- Lens: 28-300mm, F2.8-4.9 (10.7x zoom)
- Auto/Manual - 10cm Macro
- 2.0 " TFT LCD Monitor
- Movie Mode/Video Output: Yes
- xD-Picture Card, CF & Microdrive
- Batteries: 4x AA

RICOH GR Digital — £369 or £17 mth

The 10th Anniversary GR series digital – perfect for amateurs and professionals alike

- 8.5 Million pixels – 3264x2448 pixels
- 28mm f5.9 lens
- 2.5 " Color TFT LCD Monitor
- Movie Mode/Video Output: Yes
- 26MB Internal. Requires: SD Card
- Batteries: 2x AAA

SONY Cybershot R1 — £599 or £24 mth

The world's first integrated lens digital still camera to combine 10.3MP and live preview!

- 10.3 Million pixels – 3888x2592 pixels
- 24-120 mm f2.4-4.8 (5x Zoom)
- 2.0" TFT LCD Monitor
- Movie Mode/Video Output: Yes
- Storage: MS, MS Pro, CF
- Batteries: Li-ion Batteries

the digital camera company

Canon

EOS 400D 18-55mm lens kit

10.5 megapixels
SLR manual
2.5" TFT LCD

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4x optical zoom
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18-135mm lens included
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Nikon S4

6 megapixels
10x optical
2.5" TFT LCD

The Nikon S4 with its slim, compact design and 6 megapixels integrates its broad 10x zoom range in a swivel design to offer a wide range of shooting angles.

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FUJIFILM

Finepix S5600

5 megapixels
10x optical
1.8" TFT LCD

The Fuji Finepix S5600 packs a lot into its compact body. Featuring Fujifilm's acclaimed Super CCD HR technology; manual control; and a 10x Fujinon zoom lens.

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Canon

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3x optical
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Canon

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SAMSUNG

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5x optical
TV quality movies

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3x optical
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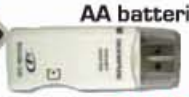

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Classic - Modern - Digital
PENTAX TRAINED TECHNICIANS
Free Estimates / Next Day Repairs
WE SELL SPARE PARTS
for discontinued and current camera's.
Speak to a technician Direct;
Tel: 020 8232 8111
Asahi Photo,
5 Albany Parade, High Street,
Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 0JW
www.asahiphoto.co.uk

NEXT MONTH

WHAT DIGITAL CAMERA awards 2006

Don your tuxedo, as we name the very best cameras and accessories of 2006

BIG TESTS

Nikon D40

Small, but is it perfectly formed?

Olympus E400

Even smaller – but does it make a big impression?

Technique

SHOOTING FOR EBAY

Better pictures make bigger sales. Here's our guide to great product photography

PLUS:

- CANON POWERSHOT G7
- NIKON COOLPIX S7C
- SONY CYBERSHOT N2
- OLYMPUS MJU 730
- CANON POWERSHOT A640
- KODAK EASYSHARE Z710

Pocket Marvel

Caplio R5

From Marvellous Macro to Lavish Landscapes

With it's class-leading 28–200mm* wide-angle optical zoom lens, 7.24 million pixel effective resolution, vibration correction function, new Ricoh Smooth Imaging Engine II image processing engine and ISO 1600 low-light low-noise capability; the new Ricoh CaplioR5 takes bright, sharp, noise-free shots whatever the conditions.

* 35mm equivalent. Compact digital cameras less than 150g.

Camera shown approx life size

Additional features:

- 1cm wide macro mode
- Ultra-fast start-up and near-instantaneous shooting
- 2.8 frames per second continuous shooting capability (limited only by the storage media capacity)
- Bright 2.5-inch 230k pixel LCD screen
- Enhanced Skew Correction function
- 30 frames per second VGA movie mode with sound
- Long-life rechargeable battery (approx. 380 shots under CIPA standards)

All photographs taken using a Ricoh camera

www.ricoh.co.uk/cameras

RICOH

Compact camera or digital SLR...
why not get the best of both worlds?

- 6MP Super CCD HR Sensor
- Real Photo Technology™ II Processor
- Full resolution ISO 100-3200 sensitivity
- JPEG and RAW shooting modes
- 28-300mm equivalent 10.7x optical zoom
- High resolution 2.5-inch TFT screen
- High performance electronic viewfinder
- Full photographic control
- TV-quality movie mode
- Ultra-fast face-detection technology

FinePix S6500fd

If you've been put off a digital SLR because of the cost, the size, and the lack of features such as movie mode and live view, we've got the perfect solution. The FinePix S6500fd offers the power of an SLR in a compact, high-performance package. Built around the unique Super CCD HR sensor used in the multi-award-winning FinePix F30, the S6500fd offers class-leading full resolution ISO 100-3200 performance. Throw in a 28-300mm (equiv) lens, live preview, VGA movies and face detection, and you really can have your cake and eat it.

www.fujifilm.co.uk

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